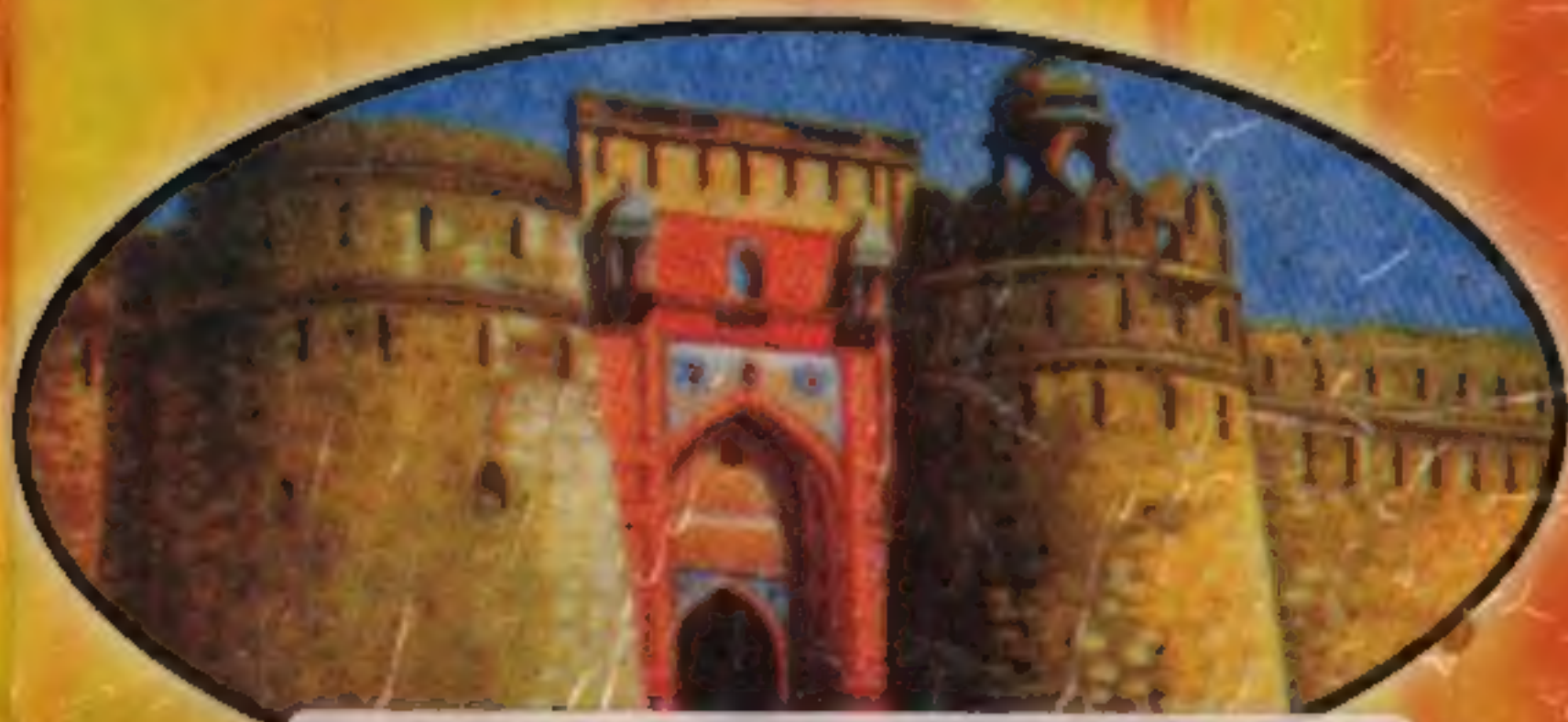


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# **HISTORY OF SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN STATES (1620-1956)**



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15 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**CHITTARANJAN KR. PATY**



# **HISTORY OF SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN STATES**

***Dedicated  
To  
My Parents  
Shrimati Tabitha Paty  
Sri Sudhir Kumar Paty***

# **HISTORY OF SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN STATES**

**DR. CHITTARANJAN KUMAR PATY**

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## **PREFACE**

The present book is an out come of my thesis entitled "History of Seraikella and Kharsawan States" (1620-1956), submitted to the Ranchi University for the award of Ph.D Degree. Care has been taken, in this book, to keep as close to the thesis as possible. The book is, therefore, a well-nigh unabridged and complete reproduction of the thesis in question. During the progress of the thesis, it was borne in mind that it would be presented in a book form. A thorough revision of it was, therefore, made before going to the press. The history of these two erstwhile Princely States of the Eastern Region makes an interesting reading as well as a rewarding one in as much as it traces the changing fortunes of the Two States since 1620 right upto 1956.

The whole history records a gradual change from medievalism to modernism and from loyalty to the ruling Princes to loyalty to the upsurging Indian Nationalism. The whole will read as an Indian history in microcosm. I think, both the Scholars and the public in general will profit by it. Hence it is presented in a book form.

Chaibasa

**Chittaranjan Kumar Paty**

# ABBREVIATIONS

Adj.	:	Adjutant
AIR	:	All India Reporter
B.S.A.	:	Bihar States Archives
Comnr.	:	Commissioner
Comp.	:	Compiled
E.I.Co.	:	East India Company
For. Poll. Dept.	:	Foreign Political Department
G.G.A.S.W.F.P.D.R.	:	Governor General Agent's South West Frontier Political Despatch Register
G.O.I.	:	Government of India
G.S.I.	:	Geological Survey of India
J.A.S.B.	:	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.B.O.R.S.	:	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society
Kms.	:	Kilometres
N.A.	:	Not Available
N.A.I.	:	National Archives of India
Poll. Des. Reg.	:	Political Despatch Register
R.A.K.S.	:	Report on the Administration of Kharsawan
R.A.S.S.	:	Report on the Administration of Seraikella State
S.C.P.P.	:	Spare Copies of Porahat Papers
S.D.O.C.	:	Singhobhum District Old Correspondence
S.O.C.	:	Singhbhum Old Correspondence
S.R.C.	:	State Reorganisation Commission
S.W.F.P.D.R.	:	South West Frontier Political Despatch Register.
W.B.A.	:	West Bengal Archives



# INTRODUCTION

This work seeks to present a systematic and comprehensive account of the political and socio-economic history of the Seraikella and Kharsawan States for the period between 1770 and 1956. These two states occupy an important place in the history of Chotanagpur. At present these two states form a part of the Singhbhum District known as Saraikela Sub division. The published literature available regarding the history of these areas does not seem to provide a systematic historical account of the region. The district Gazetteers written by L.S.S.O. Malley and P.C. Roy Chaudhary are too general and too broad on account of the District as a whole to give a clear picture of it. There is another document entitled -"Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharsawan through the ages", published in the year 1954 and written by N.N. Singh Deo, highlights the growth and predominance of the Oriya culture, as a suitable cause for their merger with Orissa. Besides these, there are two anthropological works, "The Hos of Seraikella" written by A.N. Chatterji and T.C. Das and "The Bhumij of Seraikella" written by T.C. Das. But these two pioneering works touch only on the socio-cultural condition of the Hos and Bhumij tribes of Seraikella. Under the circumstances, a systematic and detailed history of the region seemed to be imperative. It was deemed essential to bring the history of the area to-date. Moreover, the tribal revolt of the area, the rise of these states to a powerful position in Chotanagpur, the people's struggle for freedom, the peculiar socio-religious organisations and customs, specially the "Chhao dance", the process of modernisation of the area and the gradual progress of the people from the agricultural life to an industrial one-all these inspired the undertaking of this work.

The work consists of eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the nomenclature, area and location, physical aspects and the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan. The second chapter explores the history of the area upto the founding of the Seraikella and Kharsawan States and their gradual expansion through conquests. The third chapter studies the British contact with Seraikella and Kharsawan and the

help they rendered to the British in consolidating their power in Singhbhum upto 1856. The fourth chapter depicts the revolt of 1857 in the region and the subsequent developments. It also deals with the extension of the freedom movement to these two states. The fifth chapter is concerned with the linguistic controversies and the subsequent reorganisation of the states in 1956. The sixth chapter describes aspects of general and land revenue administration in the region. Society and economy of the states constitute the theme of the seventh chapter .

The present work is based on archival sources, records and published works available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta, Bihar State Archives, Patna and the National Library, Calcutta. Journals, particularly the journals of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Bihar and Orissa Research Society have been of considerable help in this study. Published Oriya books available in Seraikella have provided useful information. Some knowledgeable individuals directly connected with historical events or having valuable knowledge of the past have helped in bridging the gaps which helped in making the narrative continuous and unbroken.

I am extremely indebted to my former teacher and present supervisor, Dr. B. Virotam, Professor of History, Ranchi University for his valuable suggestions and inspiring guidance which enabled me to complete this research work. Dr. A.K. Sen, my teacher and Head of the Department of History, Tata College, Chaibasa, not only helped me in bringing about qualitative improvements in my work but also constantly goaded me to complete it. My grateful thanks are also due to my teacher Prof. H.M.L. Baxi, formerly the head of the Department of English, Tata college, Chaibasa for encouragement and literary assistance. My father, Sri Sudhir Kumar Paty was a constant source of inspiration but for whom the present work could not have been completed. I am also obliged to Late Bholanath Kar, late G.D. Bagchi and Late N. Mahato for their encouragements. Thanks are also due to Mr. P.C. Das, G.B. Pati, U.K. Mishra, and P.P. Patnaik, all Advocates of Seraikella Bar, Mr. S Acharya of Tentaposi village of Seraikella and G. Manjhi of Seraikella

for their help and advice given from time to time. My students - Nityananad Sarangi, Dilip Patu, Nageshwar Mahato, Satyabanta Kar and Pradip Acharya collected some valuable materials for which I extend my grateful thanks. I am also thankful to my friend Dr. Murli Sahu, Head, Department of History, A.B.M. College, Jamshedpur, Prof. N. Mahato, Department of Commerce, K.S. College, Seraikella, Mr. Ajit Kumar Singh Deo, Mr. Santosh Kumar Jaiswal, both Advocates, Chaibasa Bar, Kali Prasad Sharma (Haru Babu), Khidirpur, Calcutta and Sri Chandra Bhusan Deogam, Editor Cum Publisher and Sales Manager, Official Language Commission, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, New Delhi, for their valuable help. Lastly, I must make a mention of my wife Mindula who kept me free from much of the family liabilities and sustained me during these years of mental and physical strain.

**Dr. Chittaranjan Kumar Paty**

♦

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## CHAPTER 1

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# THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

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To trace down the nomenclature of a place to its exact source is very much like attempting to find out the remote source of an obscure river. This is so with the nomenclature of both Seraikella and Kharaswan the two erstwhile native states of Eastern India. Many anecdotes and folklores are afloat that go to explain in one way or the other the possible origin of the present names of the two states under study. One anecdote goes back to times immemorial. This ancient anecdote says that the name "Seraikella" is derived from the word "Saali Gutu" -a village located at about two or three kilometers from the present site of Seraikella township<sup>1</sup>. This name appears to be of tribal origin and means that it was a village -a small unknown hamlet, for the word "Gutu" in Ho dialect means a village. In course of time, there was an immigration of Oriya-speaking people from the neighbouring States of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar and the word "Gutu" was replaced by the words "Kela" and "Sarai". Thus the present name "Seraikella" has both a tribal and a non-tribal origin<sup>2</sup>.

Another anecdote in regard to the possible origin of the present name of Seraikella is that it is derived from the word 'Salaikella'. It is said that there was a ruler named Raja Narangi, who ruled over this area. During his reign, Seraikella was known as "Singdih". Raja Narangi allotted this area to one of the Bhuiyan groups known as "Solahkali" brothers and so the area came to be known as "Salaikela" and the former name Singdih was given up. Thus the name "Seraikella" is the corrupt form of "Salaikela"<sup>3</sup>.

The anecdote regarding the possible origin of the present name of Kharaswan is mentioned in the old Oriya manuscript known as, "Maduiya". According to this manuscript, there was a Zamindar known as Khar which was popularly pronounced as Kharse. This Kharse used to live at Samarda Pith. He was the land-lord of eighty villages. A neighbouring Raja known as Narangi declared war against him. The war lasted for many years. But Kharse could not be vanquished. Then

Narangi out of malice invoked the blessings of the Mother Goddess "Pauri" and suddenly Kharse's fort was destroyed by fire. Kharse also lost his life and the area came under the sway of Raja Narangi who changed the name of the village-Samarla to Kharsawan<sup>4</sup>. This story is corroborated by the people of Kharswan also. There is a belief current among the people of the area that the tribal chief named Kharse had lost his life during a foreign invasion and was buried there. The place where he slept in eternal peace is mentioned in the local language of the people as "Kharsa-suwan" i.e. "Kharsa sleeps there". In course of time the place came to be known as "Kharsa-suwan". Thus "Kharsawan" might be the corrupt form of "Kharsuwan"<sup>5</sup>.

Another theory which has come down to us in regard to the nomenclature of Kharsawan is that this name is derived from the constant gurgling sound heard in the area as the river Sona flows. The people could hear the sound of the running water as "Khar, Khar" and hence the area came to be known as Kharsawan<sup>6</sup>. Putting all these together into the crucible of tradition, it is not unlikely that the nomenclature of the two states owes its origin to some tribal words or to the names of the rulers of the region in the distant past.

### Location

Seraikella and Kharsawan, the two former princely States are situated within the very heart of the Singhbhum district. Both are located between 25°15' north latitude and 85°5' east longitude<sup>7</sup>. The State of Seraikella was situated between 22°29' and 22°54' north latitude and between 85°50' and 86°11' east longitude and the State of Kharsawan between 22° 41' and 22°53' north latitude and between 85° 38' and 85°55' east longitude<sup>8</sup>.

The State of Seraikella was bounded in the north by the district of Manbhum (Now Purulia district of West Bengal), on the west by the Kharsawan State and the Kolhan Government Estate, on the south by the Mayurbhanj State and on the east by the Dhalbhum Pargana of Singhbhum. It had an area of 660 sq.kms. and outside its parameter, the State held the sub-state of Keraikella which extended over an area of 79 sq.kms. The headquarter of the state was Seraikella, a town situated on the Kharkai river. The State of Kharsawan was surrounded on the north by Tamar in the district of Ranchi and Manbhum, on the east by Seraikella State, on the south by the Kolhan Government Estate of Singhbhum, and on the west by the Porahat State of the same district. The area of the State was only 230 sq.kms. The headquarter of the State



was at Kharsawan, situated on the bank of river-Sona, five kilometers from Amda (now Raj Kharsawan) Railway Station of the Bengal Nagpur Railway (now South Eastern Railway)<sup>9</sup>.

The area of these States changed from time to time. After independence, both the States merged in Bihar on 18 May, 1948<sup>10</sup>. The merger was subsequently confirmed by the Government order dated 27 July, 1949<sup>11</sup>. According to the above order the merger became effective from the 1st day of August 1949. Both the States came to constitute a separate Sub-division named as Seraikella Sub-division<sup>12</sup>. This Sub-division has also been enlarged from time to time adding some of the portions of the adjoining districts of Bihar for administrative convenience. On 5th August, 1954, 39 villages of the Khunti Sub-division of Ranchi district were transferred to Singhbhum district because of their proximity with Seraikella<sup>13</sup>. Further, after the reorganisation of the Indian States in 1956, the areas comprising Ichagarh and Chandil Police Stations of Manbhum District were added to Seraikella Sub-division which now form apart of Singhbhum District<sup>14</sup>.

### Physical Features

Seraikella and Kharsawan were full of jungles, hills, rivers and plain lands. To the north of Seraikella there is a high range of hills, separating Seraikella from Manbhum, with several peaks rising to a height of over 1200' above sea level. It is traversed by some passes, while to the east the river Subarnarekha breaks through and forms the boundary of the State for about 20 kils. The area near this range known as Bankhandi, is rugged, broken and to a great extent covered with forests. The remainder of the State is an undulating plain comprising the valleys on the Kharkai river, its tributary, the Sanjai and a few feeder streams. The surface is broken up by numerous ridges and scattered hills here and there. Towards the south, however, the country is fairly level, the ridges and depressions not being so marked as they are further north, and in the extreme south there is another low range of hills flanking the Kharkai valley, which runs south-west into the Mayurbhanj State, but this range does not cover the north and it runs along the borders of Mayurbhanj in the Icha Pir which lay to the south. There are altogether 75 sq. kms. of forest containing Sal and other valuable trees<sup>15</sup>.

To the north of Kharsawan State, there is a range of hills rising at Bandi to 800 metres above sea level. The area immediately to the south of this, forming the Kolhan Pir, is rocky and broken. The rest of the

State is a low land tract in which almost the whole of the cultivable area has been cleared of forest and turned from waste into rice land. The region is on the whole undulating, but is dotted here and there with isolated hills, and a few miles west of Kharsawan there is a small range rising to a height of 500 metres. Forest in the State is comparatively scarce and exists over and around the hills<sup>16</sup>.

The three principal rivers of the State of Seraikella are the Subarnarekha, the Kharkai and the Sanjai. The Subarnarekha forms the north-eastern boundary from Raghunathpur to a short distance east of Gamharia near which it joins the Kharkai. The Kharkai first touches the State of its south-western corner and flowing north forms the boundary between it and the Kolhan. Near Tholko village about 10 kilometres south of Seraikella town, it turns to the north west and runs through the centre of the State being joined by the Sanjai near Lengtasai, about 5 Kms. south of the Gamharia railway station. This united stream, after flowing a few more kilometres to the west turns sharply to the north, forming the boundary between Seraikella and Dhalbhum, till it joins the Subarnarekha. The Sanjai, which enters the State from the west, flows almost parallel to the latter river and is joined at Dugni (about 20 Kms. from Seraikella) by the Sona river flowing from the north-west<sup>17</sup>.

The State of Kharsawan has only two important rivers-Sona and Sanjai with their tributaries Suru, Sankhua and Binjai. The State is separated on the south from the Kolhan by the river Sanjai and is traversed by two of its tributaries, the Binjai and the Sankhua, which flows through it from north-west to south-east<sup>18</sup>. These rivers are not navigable. During hot season the streams almost disappear while in the rains they are rushing torrents only.

### **The People: Their Composition And Characters**

The people of the two States of Seraikella and Kharsawan were of a mixed stock. At first there was a large movement of the tribal people who must have come in waves in very ancient times from Chotanagpur proper<sup>19</sup>. But even before the advent of the tribals in this area there were people already inhabiting the region. These people, however, were still nomadic, although they had fixed some habitation at places of convenience<sup>20</sup>.

These people were known as the Saraks. They were later on replaced by the Bhuiyans and the Hos. These Saraks had wandered into this area in search of metals like copper and coexisted with the Bhuiyans and the Hos. Thus there was a three-fold mixture of population<sup>21</sup>.

According to the census of 1872, the population of Seraikella State was 66, 347 and that of Kharsawan 26, 280. Further in the Census of

1941, the population of Seraikella rose to 1,54,844 while that of Kharsawan to 50,580. In the census of 1951 when both the States came to constitute a separate Subdivision, the total population was 1,99,922<sup>22</sup>. As to the distribution of population according to sex, in the census of 1951, out of the total population of 1,99,922, 1,00,273 were males and 99,649 were females. The people of Seraikella and Kharsawan lived predominantly in villages. According to the census of 1951, 1,99,707 persons, out of a total of 1,99,922 i.e.95.89% lived in 763 villages. In the two towns of Seraikella and Kharsawan the population numbered 4,777 and 3,438 respectively. The total occupied houses were 40,744, out of which 39,288 were situated in rural area and 1,456 were in the urban areas<sup>23</sup>.

Most of the people were Hindus. According to the census of 1951 they comprised about 62% of the total population of 1,99,922. Next to the Hindus came the tribal population. They constituted about 37% of the Population. Besides, there were Muslims and Christians also, but their number was very insignificant<sup>24</sup>.

The people of this area used different languages. Oriya was the major language. Besides Oriya, Bengali, Hindi, Ho and Santhali were the other main languages and dialects. In the eastern portion of Seraikella most of the people used to speak both the Oriya and Bengali languages while in the western portion of Seraikella and proper Kharsawan, the main language was Oriya<sup>25</sup>. According to the census of 1951, out of the- total population of 1,99,922, Oriya speaking population was about 24%. Next to Oriya came the Bengali language. Bengali speaking population constituted about 21.83% of the total inhabitants. Similarly Hindi was spoken by 11.82% of the total population. The tribal people spoke mainly Ho and Santhali. Ho speaking people comprised about 21.8 % and Santhali speaking about 15% of the population<sup>26</sup>

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## CHAPTER 2

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# THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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The sources for the study of the ancient history of Seraikella and Kharsawan are mostly myths folklores and anecdotes, but we have also some archaeological remains which throw light on the early history of the area. They show that during ancient times some sort of primitive civilization and culture did exist in the region now included in Seraikella and Kharsawan.

The primitive history of Seraikella and Kharsawan dates back to the stone age. Singhbhum, including Seraikella and Kharsawan, is one of the few districts of Bihar where primitive implements and tools have been found. The first discovery of such remains was made by Captain Beaching in the year 1868 when he marched from Ranchi with a company of the 10th Madras Infantry to put down some disturbances in the Keonjhar State. A number of chipped implements were found in the streams near Chaibasa and Chakradharpur. These remains were of charred flakes and knives. These flakes may be referred to the old stone Age. Since these places are in the immediate vicinity of Seraikella and Kharsawan, it may be inferred that these two places also passed through the Palcolithic Age. Again in 1917, C. W. Anderson, discovered a number of implements in the valley of the Sanjay river and its tributary streams. This river flows through Porahat, Kharsawan and Seraikella. The implements were both chipped and polished. These seem to belong to the Stone Age<sup>1</sup>.

, Our lack of knowledge about Seraikella and Kharsawan during the copper age is colossal, but some of the copper weapons found here are preserved in the Patna Museum<sup>2</sup>. The copper belt of Singhbhum extended to a distance of about forty-miles, passing through Kharsawan, Seraikella and Dhalbhum and then turning south east it disappeared in the alluvial soil of Midnapur<sup>3</sup>. The discovery of ancient copper weapons shows that during the Copper Age also the place was not unknown.

During the Chalcolithic Age we have no authoritative sources to corroborate the history of the area. Most probably the entire Singhbhum

region including Seraikella and Kharsawan was included in the ancient *Samhadesa* of Pauranic tradition forming as it did the merchant-land between the Gangetic plain and the eastern sea coast<sup>4</sup>. Gold coins of Roman period were found in Bamanghati in Mayuribhanj district of Orissa. Bamanghati is situated at 'a short distance from the Southern fringe of Seraikella. It is believed that these coins found their way to this area from the famous sea port of Tamralipti because in the ancient period there was a trade route from northern India to Tamralipti passing through Bamanghati and Porahat in Singhbhum<sup>5</sup>. Similarly some ancient coins have been discovered at a place called Kamagiri-Guda in Seraikella State. These coins are preserved in the small-size museum of the Seraikella State<sup>6</sup>.

It is just possible that Singhbhum, along with the greater portion of Chotanagpur was included in the empire of Samudragupta. He conquered all the jungle areas between south Bihar and Orissa which was, again, a part of the extensive forest belt from Bhagalpura to coastal Orissa<sup>7</sup>.

Further, a copper plate inscription belonging to the 11th century was found near the bank of Sanjay river in the village Ramgarh, about 6 Kms from Kharsawan. This Sanskrit inscription, partly in prose and partly in verse, is in the Devanagari script. It records the grant of the village Simvala to one Purushottan Deva by Maharaja Dhiraj Karmaditya Deva. Karmaditya and his successor Prachanda Ditya appearing in the inscription ruled over a fairly large territory, but they are not known to history so far. 'Karmaditya' was the title adopted by the Gupta king Skandagupta, but he had flourished long before. The exact identification of the family to which these two kings belonged is not possible to be established<sup>8</sup>.

In and around Seraikella and Kharsawan the ancient copper mines and tanks (Ponds) speak of Jain influence. It is said that the people who worked the mines were a race called *Sarak* or *Sarawak*. It is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word *Sravaka*, a term used by the Jains for lay brethren. Narayanpur situated at 8 Kms east of Seraikella town had in its vicinity a place called Tamadungri. (Copper hill) by the local villagers, which was a centre of copper industry in ancient times<sup>9</sup>. This period might have been the 11th Century when the kingdom of Orissa flourished. Another trace of Jain influence in this area is the existence of numerous tanks known *Sarak* tanks in Seraikella, Kharsawan and other parts of Singhbhum<sup>10</sup>. The 'Ahar bandh' with remains of a temple at Karaikella and the 'Mullick Bandh' of Seraikella town itself are the best examples of such *Sarak* tanks in this region<sup>11</sup>.



There was some relation between this territory and the Pala dynasty. During the reign of Rampala, mention is made of an area called 'Atavika Desa' whose chief was Lakshmi Sura. He was the head of the group of feudatory chiefs of Atavika Desh. Probably, he was the chief of the area which included also Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>12</sup>.

There are some other archaeological monuments also in the Seraikella region. Benisagar, a place about 70 kms south of Chaibasa has several low mound, stone-temples, Shivalingams, stone images and a tank. These are ascribed to the 10th or the 11th century<sup>13</sup>. At Kuchung, 3, kms south-east of Seraikella town, stone pillars, statues, and ancient bricks were extent till the recent past. They were the remains of what must have been once a lofty Mandapa. To the south east of the aforesaid site ruins of two temples have been found. The ruins comprise bricks and stones etc. These temples were probably Shaivite. Besides, there were found some Buddhist and Brahminical images, remarkable for the excellence of execution. Many of these Brahmanical images were erotic in character. The local tradition ascribes these temples to king Sasanka of Gour. The period of these remain goes back to 11th century A.D. similar to the remains of Benisagar<sup>14</sup>. Icha and Kera also have ancient temples. Icha, a large village, is situated about 20 kms south-east of Seraikella town. The temples here are influenced by medieval Orissa architecture. Similar temples have been found in Panch Pargana of Ranchi district of Bihar and Purulia district of West Bengal and have been ascribed to the Pala period (11th to 12th century). Accordingly the aforesaid temples of Icha and Kera also may be ascribed to the same period<sup>15</sup>.

There are neither reliable Muslim archaeological remains nor any other records to prove that the muslims ever subjugated this area. During the medieval period there began the political career of the Singh ruler. It is mentioned in the "Vamsa Prabha Lekhna" the chronicle of the Singh Dynasty that the first Singh Dynasty of Porahat was founded in or about 1205 A.D. Darpanarayan Singh was the first ruler. He worshipped "Pauri Devi" a peculiar Bhuiyan deity corresponding to the 'Thakurani Mai' of the Bhuiyans of Keonjhar -a deity revered to this day by the people of this area<sup>16</sup>. Another tradition about him is that he was a Rathor or Kadumbansi Rajput from Marwar. An adventurer, passing through this country on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Jagannath at Puri, he was chosen by the people of this area as their Raja<sup>17</sup>. Thus the Porahat Raj was founded long before the advent of the Muslim power in this area.

Whatever be the origin of the Porahat Raj family; it is clear that it was Rajput. There is enough evidence to show that the blood of these ruling chiefs was not of the Hos the original inhabitants of these parts. The Rajput origin of the Porahat Raj is admitted by the ruling chiefs of Orissa. Thus the rank of the chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan, a branch of the Porahat family, was very high and they came to be accepted as Surajbansiya Rajputs<sup>19</sup>. Anyway, the founder of the Singh dynasty built a fort at Porahat, selecting it on account of its inaccessibility or perhaps because it commanded the passes through the hills. This locale, thus, became the capital of the Singh family<sup>20</sup>.

During the Turko-Afghan period we come across only one event, which relates to the earliest contact of this region with the muslims. *Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shah* of Shams-i-Siraj Afilnotes that Firoz Shah Tughlaq after his campaign against the Raja of Jajnagar (Orissa) passed through this region on his way back to Delhi<sup>21</sup>. Thus we find that during the period between 1206 and 1526 A.D. Seraikella and Kharsawan along with whole Singhbhum remained outside the pale of Turko-Afghan sway. Even so, this was also the period when large scale immigration of different people such as the Saraks, the Bhuiyans, the Hos and the Rajputs etc. was taking place. New habitants of the aforesaid groups were coming. These were principally Saraks, Bhuiyans and the Hos. Their settlements came up all over this region, although on the basis of materials available, it is difficult to ascertain the exact period when these settlements came Up<sup>22</sup>.

After Sultan Firoz Tughlaq, the next important Muslim to visit this area was Kalapahar. He passed through this region at the head of twelve thousand horsemen<sup>23</sup>. Again sometime after the battle of Takkrai on 3rd March, 1575 A.D., Junaid tried to enter Bihar through Singhbhum<sup>24</sup>. It is said that Raja Man Singh, General of Akbar, passed through this region during the Mughal expedition against Qutluq Khan Afghan of Orissa in 1592<sup>25</sup>. During this period Ranjit Singh was the ruler of Porahat and he was also a contemporary of Akbar. When Raja Man Singh passed through this region, Ranjit seems to have joined him as a feudatory chief more as a gesture of friendliness than as a mark of submission<sup>26</sup>.

### **Foundation of Seraikella State**

Some ruling chiefs of the area branched off from the Porahat Raj family. Thus the State of Saraikella was founded in the year 1620 A.D. by Kunwar Bikram Singh, the second son of Purusottam Singh, the then Raja of Poraha<sup>27</sup>. As regards the name of Bikram Singh's father, there is difference

of opinion. It is mentioned that Bikram Singh was the son of purusottam Singh, the Raja of Porahat<sup>28</sup>. Another theory is that Jagannath Singh, the ruler of Porahat had two sons, Tikayat J>urusottam Singh and Kunwar Bikram Singh.purusottam Singh, the eldest son succeeded his father as the Raja of Porahat according to the law of primogeniture. Bikram Singh, the younger son was given a fief of 75 square Kms. with 12 villages, bounded in the north and south by the Sanjay and Kharkai rivers. Bikram Singh made Seraikella, a centrally located place his headquarters<sup>29</sup>. The ruling family accepted the latter theory of the origin of this dynasty. There is yet another story about the , foundation of this State. A son was born to Purusottam Singh, the Raja of Porahat after his death and the child was brought up and protected by his uncle Bikram Singh. This son of Purusottam Singh, after coming of age, became the Raja of Porahat. As a reward for the loyalty ofhis uncle Bikram Singh, he gave Seraikella, Asantalia and Rajabasa Pir to the latter with the title of Kunwar and permitted him to exercise unrestricted authority over the area. Since then the family became divided into the Porahat Raj family and the Seraikella Raj family<sup>30</sup>. The fact that Seraikella was given to Bikram Singh by the Raja of Porahat is corroborated by various other sources also.

### Expansion of the two States

Kunwar Bikram Singh was a good soldier and a natural leader of men. He invaded the bordering areas and extended his sway over a large part of the adjoining territories. He then crossed the Sanjay river and attacked Patkum bordering on his States. Patkum people were defeated and forced to retreat. Thus he vanquished that territory comprising the present Kandra, Dugni and Banksai areas. He reserved Kandra Pir for himself. At that time Kandra Pir consisted of only three villages, viz. Kandra, Raghunathpur and Burudih, the first of these being a jungle. Bikram Singh's next campaign was against Barabhum. He attacked , Barabhum and Conquered the land now known as Ganabania. But at that time it was a vast tract of jungle. This also he kept for himself. After this he attacked Tamar and wrested Kharsuan from the Tamar Raja. Thus Bikram Singh extended his sway over all the neighbouring areas<sup>31</sup>.

Bikram Singh from his two wives had five sons, Narsingh, Padam Singh, Kishore Singh, Bizum Singh and Birhar Singh<sup>32</sup>. According to the law of primogeniture, the eldest son Narsingh succeeded as the Raja of Seraikella. He gave Kharsawan, Asantalia, Dugni and Banksai Pir to Padam Singh, Kishore Singh, Bizum Singh and Birhar Singh, respectively for their maintenance. These became the ancestors of the present chiefs

of Kharsawan and the maintenance-holders of Dugri and Banksa. Later on Asantalia merged with Kharsawan due to lack of male heirs<sup>33</sup>. Thus the second Singh dynasty was founded in Seraikella and Kharsawan and Bikram Singh by all accounts was its founding father. Our information about the early rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan is meagre. Medieval sources, though numerous do not throw much light on this period. It seems that before the coming of the British, both the States were busy with consolidating their power and position and extending their territories<sup>34</sup>.

### **Advent of the British in the neighbourhood of Seraikella**

The first British expedition against Dhalbhum in 1767 brought the British into contact with the Raja of Porahat who was then called the Raja of Singhbhum. The British had received Midnapur in the year 1760 from Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal, since then they had to face great difficulties from the chiefs of the forest and hilly areas lying to the west of Midnapur such as Chhatna, Supur, Manbhum, Barabhum and Dhalbhum etc. These chiefs always made predatory incursions into their newly acquired territories<sup>35</sup>. Thus for the safety of their policy of expansion the East India Company Government undertook a military expedition to acquire these hilly areas<sup>36</sup>. In this campaign they succeeded in subduing all the chiefs of the area before March, 1767, except those of Singhbhum and Patkum<sup>37</sup>. When they subjugated Dhalbhum, they also came to know about other parts of Singhbhum<sup>38</sup>.

The British interest in Singhbhum in general and in Seraikella and Kharsawan in particular was imperialistic as well as commercial. The English wanted to expand their jurisdiction in this area. During the period under review they came face to face with the Maratha power, then entrenched in Orissa and they were thus trying to extend their sway over Orissa also. Situated as it was between Bengal and Orissa, the Singhbhum hilly area had a strategic importance. During wars the Marathas not only took shelter in these hills and forests but also got assistance from the rulers of these areas. To thwart the Marathas, the British wanted to enlist the support and sympathy of these rulers or at least wanted them to be neutral in this power struggle<sup>39</sup>. Besides, sometimes the rebel leaders in the adjoining areas of Singhbhum rose against the British, took shelter in these areas and also took help from the tribals of this area. This posed a serious problem for the British<sup>40</sup>. Again, the British wanted to obtain the shortest and direct route between Benaras and Orissa. It was also necessary for them to secure a direct link between newly acquired Sambalpur and Bengal. All these routes

passed through Singhbhum area. Due to all these reasons, it was necessary to forge a friendly relationship with the rulers of this area<sup>41</sup>.

Besides, there were some commercial reasons also. At that time it was a common practice to get salt from Orissa and to sell it in Bengal and the neighbouring areas. This clandestine internal trade carried on by the local people caused loss of revenue to the British. As these salt traders passed through the jungles of Singhbhum, the British wanted to exercise some control over this trade with the help of the chiefs of Singhbhum<sup>42</sup>. When the English East India Company captured Dhalbhum in 1767, the Raja of Porahat sent an emissary to the English and requested them to help in putting his country in order, promising in return the payment of an annual revenue. The immediate problem facing the Raja was that he was confined by his cousin Shoo Nath Singh. This request for help provided the English an opportunity to form a definite and clear idea of the position of Singhbhum, but the British did not like to take any step in this connection before having full knowledge of the political situation in Singhbhum, particularly in respect of the Marathas having any control or not over these area<sup>43</sup>. Hence George Vansittart, the Resident at Midnapur, sent two sepoys to explore Singhbhum in 1768. But they were not allowed to go beyond 3 Kms. in Singhbhum. They went back with the information that Raja Jagannath Singh was under the control of his cousin Shoo Nath Singh and that the jurisdiction of the Marathas had never extended to Singhbhum, nor did they receive the smallest revenue from that area<sup>44</sup>. Even after this intelligence, the British made no immediate attempt to enter into closer relations with the Raja of Singhbhum until they could get possession of Cuttack in Orissa<sup>45</sup>. Thus with mainly expansionist motives the English began to hover on the periphery of Singhbhum.

The circumstances which brought the British to the threshold of Seraikella and Kharsawan were the belligerent activities of the Chuars, i.e., the Bhumij tribe of Mayurbhanj and Koonjhar<sup>46</sup>. In 1769 they made one of their many predatory raids into Dhalbhum at a time when the English Company was trying to establish its control over this region. About 5,000 Chuars invaded Dhalbhum and forced the new Raja, Nimu Dhal, to retire to the fort of Nar Singh Garh. However, they were soon expelled by an expedition sent from Midnapur under Captain Forbes. Forbes then retired leaving a small party of sepoys at Kuchung. Again in the year 1770, the Chuars raided this area under the leadership of the Zamindar of Kuchung and killed all the sepoys left behind by Captain Forbes<sup>47</sup>. Lt. Goodyar was then sent from Midnapur with two Companies of sepoys to Kuchung, to take possession of the country, if possible, to arrest the Zamindar of Kuchung and take him to Midnapur. However, the idea of annexing Kuchung was given up because the act would have meant an encroachment on the rights

of the independent Raja of Mayurbhanj Kuchung was a part of the Raja's domain and he used to appoint the Zamindars of Kuchung and Bamanghati as his agents. The Raja of Mayurbhanj was however, induced by the British to dismiss the Zamindar of Kuchung and appoint the Zamindar of Bamanghat in his place. The Bamanghat Zamindar was required to obey the new arrangement and maintain peace on the border failing which he could be dispossessed of both Bamanghat and Kuchung. The British troops then withdrew<sup>48</sup>. As Kuchung just formed the border of Seraikella, the Company gained some information about the Seraikella region but seemed to be content for the time being with this initial knowledge of the re-arrangements mentioned above.

The British got another opportunity with regard to Seraikella in 1773 when Captain Forbes marched to Dhalbhum to control the transit of Orissa salt to Bengal through Dhalbhum and Singhbhum. During that period it was a common practice with the salt merchants to get salt from Orissa (which was then in the possession of the Marathas) instead of Midnapur. They transported salt through Singhbhum to Bengal and thus reduced the revenue of the English Company<sup>49</sup>. At that time the finest salt in India was manufactured in Orissa. The price of a maund of salt varied from three to four annas (18 to 25 paise) at the place of manufacture. The average price of salt was 5 annas (30 paise) per maund under the Maratha Government. The salt was a most common article of consumption of the people. In Bengal the retail price was due to the scarcity of salt on account of faulty distribution. Thus, salt was smuggled to Bengal where it fetched high price<sup>50</sup>. The salt traders, generally called in these areas as 'Nunias', transported salt in their bullock-carts<sup>51</sup>. Patna salt merchants also brought salt through the jungles of Singhbhum and Patkum which were not within the jurisdiction of either of the two provinces<sup>52</sup>. The Raja of Dhalbhum also was encouraging the smuggling of salt from Orissa. Orissa was then in the possession of the Marathas and Singhbhum was an area in which the Company's writ did not run. Hence in 1773 Capt. Forbes undertook an expedition with the aim of bringing the Raja of Dhalbhum to book. The Raja was forced to execute an obligation not to allow the merchants to transport salt through his territory in future<sup>53</sup>. Thus the English extended their sway upto Dhalbhum that year. These expeditions against Kuchung and Dhalbhum which were in the vicinity of Seraikella and Kharsawan brought the British power quite close to States. The British intention was clearly political and commercial. For the time being the two States of Seraikella and Kharsawan remained immune from any foreign intervention, but the waning authority of the Raja of Porahat very soon changed the entire scene and the British thrust towards the two States became inevitable.



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## CHAPTER 3

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# EARLY BRITISH CONTACT WITH SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN

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The British contact with Seraikella and Kharsawan in 1793 opened a new chapter in the history of these two States. That year the East India Company for the first time came into direct and even close contact with this region. Not only the two States extended their sway over the adjoining areas with the help of the British, there was also a marked growth in their power, authority, prestige and standing. The salt traders, carrying on trade with these areas, had become a problem for the East India Company. They were mostly smugglers who were engaged in their illegal activities with the connivance of the Raja of Dhalbhum and wanted a safe passage for their trade through Seraikella and Kharsawan. They smuggled salt with impunity - a fact which was resented by the Company Government<sup>1</sup>. But the immediate cause of the involvement of the Company Government was the prevailing disturbance in the Jungle Mahals<sup>2</sup>. It brought these two States face to face with the British. During the period between 1782 and 1793 there were up-risings of the people in Tamar, Shaldu and Barabhum. The Jagirdars of these areas organised a resistance against the British with the help of the local tribals. These resistance movements were, however, ultimately suppressed by the British<sup>3</sup>. The Jungle Mahals however, continued to be in ferment. As this area was adjacent to Seraikella and Kharsawan, it was feared that the uprising might spread there too. Thus on the one hand the British were facing the problems posed by the salt traders and on the other the uprising posed a potential threat to the smooth running of their government. By that time, the chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan had become influential and it was thought expedient to enter into negotiations with them in order to extend the Company's domains over these turbulent areas. Consequently in 1793, the Kunwar of Seraikella and Thakur of Kharsawan were compelled to enter into an agreement that they would neither permit the salt merchants to pass through their territories for smuggling purposes nor would they afford them any shelter from the long arms of law in case they persisted with

their smuggling activities. Further the fugitive rebels from the Company's territories were to be given no quarters by the Seraikella and Kharsawan States<sup>4</sup>. This agreement, helped the Company to penetrate into the area and roads hitherto closed to them were opened up for their entry.

Meanwhile, some changes took place in the royal houses of Seraikella and Kharsawan. Bikram Singh, the founder of Seraikella, was succeeded by his eldest son Nar Singh. After him, his eldest son Ab hiram Singh, became the Ruler of the Seraikella States<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, in Kharsawan, Padam Singh or Padinnabh Singh was succeeded by his son Jaswant Singh. After Jaswant Singh, his son, Loknath Singh was succeeded by his son Mohan Lal Singh<sup>6</sup>. During these periods Kharsawan's history remained uneventful, except for the fact that at Asantalia there was a Zamindar and on the failure of the male heir, Kharsawan in pursuance of its expansionist policy annexed Asantalia to its territory with the help of Raja of Porahat. Since then it remained a part of Kharsawan State<sup>7</sup>.

Abhiram Singh of Saraikella was one of the greatest rulers of the dynasty. It is said that owing to a quarrel with his father he fled to Mayurbhanj when he was just a boy. After he came of age he returned to Seraikella. Having inherited some of the fighting qualities of his great grand-father, Abhiram Singh annexed Kuchung Pir after having wrested it from Mayurbhanj State. During that period Kuchung pir consisted of Icha and Kuchung. The Raja of Mayurbhanj was the nominal ruler of these Pirs. But his authority was challenged by Jagannath Bhuiyan. This Bhuiyan chief commanded a great following and considered himself a sub-proprietor of these pirs. So the Mayurbhanj Raja was bent upon wiping out this recalcitrant chief. This task was entrusted to Ab hiram Singh with the assurance that if he killed Jagannath Bhuiyan, he would come to possess these pirs. Ab hiram Singh succeeded in doing this and these pirs were annexed to Seraikella in about 1800 A.D. Later on he kept Kuchung pir for himself and gave the Icha pir to his second son, Damodar Singh in about 1803 on certain conditions of service. The said Damodar Singh was the ancestor of the present zamindar of Icha<sup>8</sup>. Thus Kuchung, earlier a part of Mayurbhanj, became a part of Seraikella State. It is clear that Seraikella under the dynamic leadership of its successive rulers not only increased its territorial jurisdiction but also added to the prestige of the house. The Kharsawan State, however, did not have the good luck of having a similar dynamic leadership.

The first service Raja Abhiram Singh rendered to the E.I. Company was when Cuttack was attacked by the Marathas<sup>10</sup>. On 7 August 1803,

the second Anglo-Maratha war broke out<sup>11</sup>. During this war, the British decided to seek the help of the Chiefs of Seraikella and Mayurbhanj because the Marathas used to hover over these two States<sup>12</sup>. The Governor General, Lord Wellesley, wrote a letter dated 22 September 1803 to Raja Abhiram Singh of Seraikella and asked him to render help against the Marathas. In his letter Wellesley stated that the Marathas might pass through Seraikella. In that case, the Raja was instructed not to allow them any passage nor give them shelter in his territory. In return, the Company Government assured, the Raja the right to hold his territory rent-free<sup>13</sup>. Similarly H. Ernest, the Magistrate of Midnapur, also wrote a letter on the same day to the Raja of Seraikella requesting him for assistance against Raghuji Bhonsla<sup>14</sup>. Raja Abhiram Singh sent 1000 soldiers as military assistance and closed all the ghats to prevent the Marathas in having any access into the area. For this service the Raja was thanked by the Company Government through a parwana from the Governor-General dated 1 September, 1803. He received also a parwana from the Magistrate of Midnapur dated, 22 September and 11 October, 1803. In this war at last the British defeated Raghuji Bhonsla and annexed Cuttack. Finally by the treaty of Deogaon on 19 December, 1803 Raghuji Bhonsla ceded the province of Orissa to the English Company<sup>15</sup>. \*

The neighbouring areas of Seraikella and Kharsawan, however, continued to be in turmoil, as these areas retained their belligerent attitude towards the authorities. Continued violation of the ancient land rights of the aboriginal population led to repeated insurrections<sup>16</sup>. In 1807, five thousand Mundas of Tamar under Dhakhin Shahi and Mukund Deo of Putkum openly revolted against the British<sup>17</sup>. Both of them collected a large number of well-armed followers and plundered their respective areas. This alarmed the British. The area was close to Seraikella and Kharsawan. Hence Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, wrote a letter dated 22 March 1809 to Raja Abhiram Singh of Seraikella requesting him not to allow the insurgents to enter into his territory or give any shelter to them. He was further requested in this communication to assist Captain Rough sedge in arresting these insurgents. He was also asked to convey this news to Thakur Chaitan Singh of Kharsawan also. After getting this communication, Raja Abhiram Singh took precautionary measures and closed the ghats so that the insurgents might not enter his territory. When Captain Rough sedge started his campaigns against these rebellion's leaders, he compelled them to take shelter in the jungles. At last, with the help of Raja Abhiram Singh Captain Rough sedge captured Dakhin Shahi in March

1808 For this help, the chief of Seraikella received thanks from Lord Minto vide Parwana dated 14 March 1810<sup>18</sup>.

In 1809-1810 Baijnath Singh, a zamindar of Dampara in Dhalbhum revolted against the English Company. He was a Ghatwal Sardar of the Raja of Dhalbhum. He defied the British and took possession of the lands of the several neighbouring zamindars and extorted money from them under various threats. The British found Ramchandra Dhal, the Raja of Dhalbhum, favourably inclined towards the rebels. Ramchandra Dhal in an anti-British-posture did, in fact, permit the return of Baijnath Singh, who resumed his depredations into the areas adjoining those of the British. So widespread did these depredations become that the British troops were again called in against Baijnath Singh in 1809-10. Consequently the Raja of Dhalbhum was arrested for his supposed sympathy with the rebels but later on after the arrest of Baijnath Singh, the Raja was forgiven and released and Dampara was entrusted him<sup>19</sup>. During this revolt, the British asked Raja Abhiram Singh, in their communication dated 4 February 1810 to arrest Baijnath Singh of Dampara. Accordingly Raja Abhiram Singh rendered military assistance to the British and received the thanks of the Government vide Parwana dated 14 March, 1810<sup>20</sup>. Thus during the tenure of Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto, both Seraikella and Kharsawan rendered valuable services to the British. They also offered military assistance to the Company Government as and when desired by the latter. This friendly relations continued<sup>21</sup>.

During the reign of Raja Bikram Singh<sup>22</sup> of Seraikella the Company had to seek help from him when the third Anglo-Maratha war started in 1817. In this war the Pindaris of central India entered the political scene as a disturbing factor in as much as they were a horde of obscure free-booters and cruel marauders, employed by the Marathas as auxiliary forces in the Maratha army<sup>23</sup>. During this war they reached Ganjam in Orissa. This alarmed the British and they wrote a letter to Bikram Singh informing him that the Pindaris were present in Ganjam and requesting him to be alert and cautious so that the intruders may not trespass into their territory<sup>24</sup>. On hearing from the British, Bikram Singh took the necessary precautionary measures and began to deploy police in the bordering areas. It was apprehended that the Marathas might pass through his territory via Mayurbhanj. To obviate this possibility, he deputed his son Tikayat Ajambar Singh to Kuchung, which was a strategic point through which the invaders might come into his territory or cross into H:11; Bengal. Bikram Singh's services in this regard were appreciated by the English Company<sup>25</sup>. Thus he, like his father, continued to render



valuable services to the British. "After the victory of the English Company in the third Anglo-Maratha war in 1818, the political configuration of the country underwent a total change. With his victory, the British not only emerged as a paramount power in India, but also established their suzerainty over Cuttack and Sambalpur in Eastern India. This enabled the Company to establish modicum of control over Singhbhum in order to facilitate direct communication with Sambalpur and Bengal and to connect Cuttack by a convenient and the shortest possible route with Banaras<sup>26</sup>. To achieve this end, construction of a road from Midnapur to Sambalpur was taken up. While demarcating this road Captain Jackson passed through Seraikella in 1819 on his way from Midnapur to Sambalpur. He constructed this road and due to this, the road was named as Jackson Road. It passed through Seraikella<sup>27</sup>.

Thus Singhbhum began to loom large in the expansionist policy of the British. They planned to gain control over the Chiefs of Singhbhum. In 1819, the Political Agent, Major Rough sedge directed his assistant, Lieutenant Ruddel, to negotiate with Ghanshyam Singh, the Raja of Porahat. This Raja was unwilling to accept any demand of the British and thus negotiations broke Off<sup>28</sup>. The British then tried to negotiate with the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan and the result bore fruit. By 16 January, 1820, Bikram Singh, Chief of Seraikella and Thakur Chaitan Singh, Chief of Kharsawan willingly agreed to toe the British line<sup>29</sup>. This alarmed Ghanshyam Singh because he had been harbouring jealousy at the gradual rise of Seraikella as a strong power and its becoming a dangerous rival of the Porahat Raj<sup>30</sup>. So, with the assistance of the Company Government he wanted to become a more powerful ruler of this area. So Ghanshyam Singh wanted to forestall Seraikella and Kharsawan in getting the protection and patronage of the British. To achieve this he made an agreement with the English Company on 1st February, 1820. He agreed to pay to the Company hundred one sikka (rupees) as annual tribute. He expressed the hope that the Government would assist him in recovering his household image Paun Devi, which had been, some generations before, carried off by the Chiefs of Seraikella. It was also his desire to obtain help in reducing the Hos to submission whom he claimed to be his subjects<sup>31</sup>. Similar agreements might have been made with the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan but there is no conclusive evidence of the existence of such agreements or overtures. Rather, it appears that these two Chiefs had never paid any tribute to the British<sup>32</sup>.

However, this incident served as prelude to British penetration into Singhbhum. The main object of the Raja of Porahat was to be recognised

as Lord paramount over the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan. But this claim was disallowed by the English Company because it recognised these three Chiefs to be independent of one another. But regarding the claims for the recovery of the family deity, Pauri Devi, and the subjugation of the Hos, the Company Government assured to assist Ghanshyam Singh. However, this proved to be just a pretext for the British to interfere into the internal affairs of these ruling chiefs. The Company first tried to recover the family deity of Porahat from Seraikella. In course of time, however, it was found that no one knew as to who was the rightful owner of the idol called Pauri Devi. It was alleged that the deity was purchased by Raja Abhiram Singh, the father of Bikram Singh of Seraikella, though he knew it to be a stolen property<sup>33</sup>. The Raja of Porahat was very much worried about the loss of this family deity. He passionately believed that the absence of any male heir to him and all other troubles in his family were due to the loss of the deity, while the Raja of Seraikella was flourishing as he possessed it. He also attributed the recalcitrance of the Hos to the absence of the deity from his house<sup>34</sup>.

As the Company Government had already promised the Raja of Porahat to recover the deity for him, Major Roughsedge proceeded to Seraikella and requested Bikram Singh to restore Pauri Devi to the Raja of Porahat. But he failed in the mission<sup>35</sup> because after suppressing the Hos of Singhbhum, he died in January 1822. After his death Colonel Gilbert became the Political Agent<sup>36</sup>. He also tried to recover Pauri Devi from the Seraikella Chief for the Raja of Porahat—a promise left unredemed by his predecessor. Kunwar Ajambar Singh was the Ruler of Seraikella. Accordingly Colonel Gilbert in his letter dated 9th. September 1823, gave instruction to the Ruler of Seraikella to hand over the goddess Pauri Devi to the Raja of Porahat. But the Chief of Seraikella refused to do any such thing. Ultimately Gilbert marched with the Ramgarh Battalion into Seraikella and entered the Kunwar's house. Without any opposition, he recovered the deity and the family idol was restored to Raja Ghanshyam Singh of Porahat<sup>37</sup>. However, as claimed, by a descendant of the royal house of Seraikella, what was restored to the Raja of Porahat was a fake idol, the real image continued to remain with the royal family of Seraikella<sup>38</sup>.

Regarding other claims of the Raja of Porahat and the other Chiefs of the area, the political agent, Major Roughsedge, acknowledged the Chiefs' claims of supremacy over the Kolhan. These Chiefs claimed that the Hos were their rebellious subjects and they urged the government to force them to return to their allegiance to the Chiefs. But the Hos denied that they were ever their subjects. The Chiefs, however, admitted that for

more than fifty years they had been unable to exercise any control over them<sup>39</sup>. Majority of the people living under the jurisdiction of these Chiefs of Singhbhum, i.e. Porahat, Seraikella and Kharsawan were the Hos. They lived in a major portion of the area in Singhbhum known as the Kolhan. This area of the Hos then roughly extended from the northern side of Keonjhar State, northern and southern area of Mayurbhanj, southern portion of Kharsawan State and the whole of the western and southern portion of the Seraikella State. The Hos always rebelled against these Chiefs and had been persistent in their recalcitrance. That was why the Chief of Porahat was not alone in claiming over Lordship, both Seraikella and Kharsawan Chiefs also wanted to exercise control over them<sup>40</sup>. The matter was complicated further as the Company Government, in pursuit of its expansionist policy, wanted to control these areas. Thus it was not the promise of Roughsedge made to the Raja of Porahat only but the expansionist attitude of the British that led Major Roughsedge to launch a campaign for subjugation of the Hos of Singhbhum.

Major Roughsedge at the head of the Ramgarh Battalion of artillery, cavalry and infantry entered the Ho country with the avowed object of compelling the tribals to submit to the Raja who claimed their allegiance. His real intention was to conciliate them and to subjugate them by peaceful means, if possible<sup>41</sup>. He reached Seraikella on 20 February, 1820, from where after consultation with the Raja he despatched the proper persons to the flourishing but recalcitrant pargana of Ajudhia which was in the immediate vicinity of the Raja of Porahat. It contained twelve large populous villages. Two influential Munda Chief of that Pargana were prevailed upon, of course, with some delay, to wait on Roughsedge at Seraikella. He announced to them his intention of marching through the heart land of the Larka Hos on his way to Sambalpur. The Hos assured him of a safe transit through their parganas or pirs and promised to eschew their predatory habits and pretension to independence. On persuasion, they even expressed their willingness to return to the Raja's authority provided they were assured of protection against the vengeance of the Hos of the southern pirs<sup>42</sup>. Major Roughsedge, therefore, marched, on the 18th March 1820 to Ajua village, the most important place lying to the northern parganas of the Kolhan. He halted there at the request of the Raja of Porahat till 22nd March for the purpose of conciliating the recalcitrant inhabitants in the vicinity. He halted at Ajudhia for three days. During his stay, twelve Munda Chiefs of the village of Ajudhia waited on the Raja of Porahat and made an engagement with the Raja for the payment of rent which, it was agreed, should be fixed by themselves.

After that, each of them received a turban and clothes and left quite happily. It was probably here that Rough sedge came to know that the whole movement hinged around Gumra pir of southern Kolhan. With this information he now confidently moved to Rajabasa pir of Kunwar Bikram Singh of Seraikella on 22nd March, 1820. Rajabasa was only 22 Kms. from Seraikella and it belonged to the ancestors of Kunwar Bikram Singh. The only hostility shown by the Larka Hos of this parganas was the cutting of the embankment which removed whatever water was available in the place. During the two days, halt the Major was visited by a large number of village headmen of the pirs whom he offered presents and sought to dissuade them from predatory habits<sup>43</sup>. He thus moved very cautiously and everywhere he evinced a conciliatory attitude which won for him the peaceful allegiance of the Larka Hos who had so far denied the suzerainty of the Raja of Porahat.

Thereafter he marched into the large and populous pargana of Gumra and encamped at Chaibasa on 25 March 1820. But the moment he entered Chaibasa, "the heart land of their territory", the Larka Hos attacked his camp followers causing the death of a man and wounding some others. After this the attacking Hos took refuge in the hills, Captain Maitland was deputed at the head of a group of soldiers to cut off their retreat but he had to encounter a fierce attack of the Larkas with arrows and axes. Several of his troops were wounded and a few horse killed. On getting information that the Larka Hos had assembled in village Gutialor, Captain Maitland sent a strong detachment to that village. There too the Larkas met the party with arrows, causing them considerable loss. To drive them away from their shelter, the village was set on fire. The result of such punitive measures was that the heads of 24 villages of the Gumra pargana tendered their submission as they found that they were no longer invincible. Later the whole of the northern pirs of Kolhan submitted in March 1820 and the Hos agreed to pay tribute to the local chieftains<sup>44</sup>.

Major Rough sedge then, proceeded towards Jaintgarh and had still several encounters with the Larka Hos of the southern pirs. He reached Jaintgarh on 1st April, 1820 and tried to induce the Hos to follow the example of their brothers and come to the camp for conciliation. But till 6th April the Hos held out. In the meantime the tribals of Barandia and Gamahria proved refractory. On April 6, 1820, the Hos of Gatstahria attacked the troops of Rough sedge, killing and wounding several of his men but with the timely help of Babu Ajambar Singh, son of Raja Bikram Singh of Seraikella, he could escape from Singhbhum. This risky action of Babu Ajambar Singh was highly appreciated by Rough

sedge. But in the meantime Rough sedge fell ill and he had to leave Jaintgarh for Sambalpur without subduing Jaintgarh<sup>45</sup>.

But Singhbhum did not remain peaceful. In February 1821 the Larka Hos of Kolhan rebelled against the British. They launched an attack on the hundred Barkandazes sent under the leadership of Bhairon Singh from Sambalpur to help the Raja of Porhat in quelling the disturbances at Gumra pir<sup>46</sup>. The cause of this disturbance was the rough dealings of Subedar Bhairon Singh stationed at Pukhuria in Gumra pir with Ghasi Singh of Chakradharpur who held Khorposh villages in Gumra pir. Ghasi Singh used to visit the villages and forcibly collect cash and kind against the instructions of Major Rough sedge to realise whatever was voluntarily offered. Ghasi Singh was the debtor of Raja Ghanshyam Singh of Porhat. Hence the Raja deputed Subedar Bhairon Singh to realise the amount of Rs. 2000/- from Ghasi Singh. Ghasi Singh persuaded Bhairon Singh to accompany him to Gumra pir. Here the Mundas and Mankis assembled but they were not ready to pay such a heavy amount. Now Ghasi Singh evaded paying the arrears. This enraged Bhairon Singh. He forcibly detained Ghasi Singh for a whole day. This humiliation of Ghasi Singh displeased the Hos as they were already dissatisfied with the heavy demand of revenue at the behest of the subedar's party<sup>47</sup>.

Another cause was that the Barkandazes sent to Gumra pir frequently took away goats and fowls etc. from the Hos. This action of the soldiers kept dissatisfied the Larka Hos of the pir<sup>48</sup>. All these actions caused a flare up when the daughter of Kandu Patar, a leading Sardar of Pukhuria, was raped by two sepoys<sup>49</sup>. They assembled at Pukhuria on or about 31 January, 1821, and attacked the subedar party with axes and swords. The subedar with his party tried to escape in the darkness to Seraikella but the Larka Hos held up the party at Chiru, about 12 Kms. south of Seraikella town. A furious battle was fought between the subedar's party and the Larka Hos in which fifteen persons including the Subedar, two Mukhtears of the Raja and twenty horses were killed. All the belongings and arms of sepoys were seized. Only a few wounded horsemen could escape and report the incident to Kumar Bikram Singh of Seraikella<sup>50</sup>.

At this Bikram Singh himself went to Chiru with his soldiers and provided them aid and hospitality in his town. Now the Larka Hos decided to attack Champur where Jamadar Rattan Singh was stationed. After receiving news of Gumra and Chiru, Rattan Singh appealed to the influential Chiefs of Singhbhum for assistance. But only Bikram Singh of Seraikella responded by despatching sixty Barkandazes under Bahadur Singh. The Larkas then attacked the Champur fort on 6th February.



1821, after blocking all roads and ghats. A fierce fighting took place here which resulted in 'the loss of one haviktar, ten Barkandazes and three horses. Two men of Seraikella were also wounded. As the fort fell, the Jamadar Rattan Singh had to retreat into the village of Bunitopa in the area of Thakur Chaitan Singh of Kharsawan, after losing several of his men and ammunitions. From there he was escorted to Seraikella by Padam Singh who was especially deputed for that purpose by Kunwar Bikram Singh of Seraikella<sup>51</sup>. The Raja of Seraikella was thus awarded government Khillat for the shelter given to Jamadar Rattan Singh and to the wounded party after their rout at Pukhurias<sup>52</sup>.

Thus the entire Kolhan was at the mercy of the Larka Hos. As a result of their brilliant success, Chakradharpur and Chainpur parganas of Raja Ghanshyam Singh were burnt and then the fort at Chakradharpur was destroyed<sup>53</sup>. They also planned to attack the residence of the Raja at Poraht which compelled the Raja to flee to Anandgur. Raja Ghanshyam Singh thus begged help from Major Rough sedge. The Hos were against the Thakur of Kharsawan also because they alleged that it was Thakur Chaitan Singh who had instigated Raja Ghanshyam Singh to bring Rough sedge to Kolhan. This was why they destroyed the Asantalia Pargana of Thakur Chaitan Singh. Similarly, Kunwar Bikram Singh of Seraikella also asked for help from Rough sedge as his country was suffering at the hands of the Larka Hos<sup>54</sup>. It thus appears that the Hos of both the northern and southern pirs combined together against the British and their allies, the Chiefs of Singhbhum, who were bent upon depriving them of their freedom, so dear to them. The government believed that a combined attack from all sides could subdue the Larka Hos. This could be possible by setting up strong military posts at Seraikella and Chakradharpur. Accordingly, military forces marched from Cuttack and Bankura under the command of Lt. Col. Richards and from Sambalpur under the command of Major Rough sedge. Lt. Col. Richards was made commander of the operations. Major Rough sedge was confident of crushing the hostile Hos as there would be the loyal Ajudiha Hos in his rear, 'Sant Banteria' (sic) to his right and the powerful and well equipped Chiefs Thakur Chaitan Singh of Kharsawan and Kunwar Bikram Singh to his left. By the end of March 1821, the British forces entered Kolhan under the command of Lt. Col. Richards. Towards the end of April, several parties of the Hos had been attacked and defeated by different detachments of the force and some of them were killed. Ajudiha pir, Gumra pir, Raja Basa pir of



Seraikella and Thai pir in Bamanghati surrendered. A proclamation was issued on 29 April, 1821 to the Hos that those who would come in and submit would be pardoned<sup>56</sup>. This proclamation had the desired result as the Hos surrendered before the 9th of May, 1821, with all the heads of the villages and their forces were thus broken up<sup>57</sup>.

After the aforesaid operation, the Hos prayed to be taken under the direct rule of the British, but unfortunately their wishes were not complied with and they were compelled to enter into an agreement to pay tribute to the Chiefs<sup>58</sup>. One of the terms of the agreement was that they would encourage their children to read the Oriya or Hindi language. It was further agreed that they would pay eight annas per working plough to the Chiefs of Porahat, Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>59</sup>.

During the entire operation against the Larka Hos, the role of the Seraikella Chief was very helpful to the English even though he had not accepted the British suzerainty over his territory. Bikram Singh died in 1823. His eldest son, Ajanbar Singh, was formally installed under the title of Kunwar and a khillat or dress of honour was presented to him by the Government<sup>60</sup>. Thus the suzerainty of the British over Seraikella could be traced to some extent from the date of this event, from 1823. The year 1823 can be taken as a landmark in the progressive British expansion over Seraikella. This year witnessed not only the grant of khillat to Ajanbar Singh, the Kunwar of Seraikella but also the action taken by Colonel Gilbert against the Kunwar for recovering Pauri Devi as already mentioned in this chapter<sup>61</sup>.

Although the British had been harbouring expansionist motives at the moment they were satisfied with reducing the Larka Hos into submission to the Singhbhum Chiefs. However, the fact remains that the military successes achieved by them had already enhanced their prestige and the ruling chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan were gradually being caught in the British net of territorial aggrandisement. The subjugation of the recalcitrant Larka Hos was only a prelude to the expansion of the British power over the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan. It seems that the British Government had the intention to free Kharsawan from its dependence on Seraikella as early as 1818.

This is evident from a despatch sent by Mr. Adam, the Chief Secretary to the Government to Major Rough sedge, dated 29 August 1818, wherein the English Government recognised the Chiefs of Seraikella, Kharsawan and Porahat as independent from one other<sup>62</sup>. Similarly, in 1820 the Government declared that it was not their intention to exact any tributes

from the three Chiefs of Singhbhum nor was there any desire on their part to interfere in the internal affairs of these States. All this goes to show that the Government recognised these Chiefs to be independent of one other<sup>63</sup>. This is again clearly evident from what Mr. Gilbert, the then Political Agent wrote to the Chief of Seraikella informing him that the Ruler of Kharsawan was competent enough to decide all cases pertaining to his own area. The Seraikella Chief was further advised in the letter not to interfere in the criminal cases occurring in the land of the Thakur of Kharsawan<sup>64</sup>. Thus it is clear that since 1818 Kharsawan was accorded the status of an independent State from Seraikella by the British.

### **The Kol Rebellion of 1831-32**

During the period 1831-32 a rebellion occurred in Chotanagpur proper and spread to Seraikella, Kharsawan, Porahat and other tribal areas of Singhbhum also. This rebellion was known as the Kol insurrection of Chotanagpur. This insurrection was due to certain grievances, such as enhancement of rent, forced labour, realization of interest by creditors at exorbitant rates and so on<sup>65</sup>. But the immediate cause was the arbitrary action of one Hamath Sahi of Chotanagpur proper and some Muhammadan farmers<sup>66</sup>. Though all these causes did not affect the Hos of Seraikella and Kharsawan directly, there were some other grievances which forced the Hos of this area to join this rebellion. An important grievance of the Larka Hos against the non-tribal Thikadars was that they always misbehaved with the women of Singhbhum who went to sell goods. Jaffar Ali of Gangira in Sonapur forcibly took away all the iron which was brought by the women of Porahat side to the Murhu Bazar. Not only that he indignantly threw into their baskets only two pice for each seer of iron and took it in spite of the protest of these women, but he went on piling abuses on them. All these facts were disliked by the tribals<sup>67</sup>.

Further during this period, there was some misunderstanding between the Chiefs of Porahat, Kharsawan and Seraikella which weakened the control of the Chiefs over the tribals of the area, a misunderstanding that had arisen out of family feuds and bickerings. In this situation, the Hos attacked the villages of one Chief at the instigation of the other<sup>68</sup>. Thus the surrender of the Larka Hos (in 1821) did not last for a long period. Infected by the surrounding discontent they resumed their old practice of pillage and plunder in the neighbouring villages. They ravaged Dhalbhum, plundered Bamanghati, penetrated far into Chotanagpur and lastly joined the Kol insurrection of Chotanagpur in 1831-32. They thus formed the most formidable division of the rebel army<sup>69</sup>. The principal leaders of

this revolt hailed from Porahat and the adjoining districts of Singhbhum. The names of these leaders were Topra, Suyu, Bindrai, Kate Sarlar, Singhrat Manki, Khandu Patar and others<sup>70</sup>. Among them Khandu Patar was a very influential leader of the Hos. He was a resident of the Karaikella region of Porahat in Singhbhum<sup>71</sup>. These insurgents carried fire and sword from village to village, ruthlessly butchering every Hindu and non-aboriginal inhabitants they could lay hands on, burning their houses and looting their property<sup>72</sup>. Five villages of Kera in Singhbhum named Jamoor, Chipil, Boote Lawie, Gangeeda, Eatee and Eloyahutto had joined this movement under the leadership of Khandu Patar<sup>73</sup>.

These violent and even belligerent activities of the villagers alarmed the British also and so they informed the Kera Zamindar to keep watch over this rebellious leader<sup>74</sup>. But these efforts to bring the recalcitrant people to book were feeble and sporadic and these people continued their violent acts. They attacked and burnt down ten villages of Thakur Chaitan Singh, the Ruler of Kharsawan. Thakur Chaitan Singh feared that the insurgents would attack his residence under the leadership of Khandu Patar and Bindrai in near future. So to put down the rebellion, military operations on an extensive scale were deemed necessary. The Ramgarh Battalion, reinforced by the 50th Bengal Infantry and an other detachment marched under Captain Wilkinson to crush the rebellion. These military operations had to be continued for over two months during which many hundreds of the insurgents were killed in action, before the rebellion was finally quelled. On the 25 April 1832 Khandu Patar of Karaikella also submitted and the Kol insurrection in this area thus came to an end<sup>75</sup>. The Kol insurrection was followed by the Bhumij rebellion (1832-33) which is also known as "Ganga Narayan Hangama". This broke out in Dhalbhum and Manbhum under Ganga Narayan. This also disturbed the peace of Seraikella, Kharsawan and the adjacent areas of Singhbhum<sup>76</sup>. Ganga Narayan was a disappointed claimant to the Barabhum estate of Manbhum. He solicited the help of the neighbouring Chiefs of the Parganas adjacent to Barabhum. He asked for help from Thakur Chaitan Singh of Kharsawan also. He informed him that he had taken up arms because the Jungle Mahal's Magistrate had insulted the zamindar of Patkum by searching his private apartment during the Kol Insurrection in January and February 1832. At the end of June 1832, disturbances flared up in Patkum and to the land north of Kharsawan and the most strenuous efforts of the Daroga failed to keep the area quiet. On 25 June 1832, it was reported that Ganga Narayan was preparing to attack the Patkum Thana. The Daroga was ready to take refuge at the residence of Patkum zamindar but the zamindar

had refused to give shelter to the Daroga for fear of being himself attacked by Ganga Narayan. Hence the Daroga fled to Kharsawan in Singhbhum<sup>77</sup>.

However, in November of the same year a strong military force was collected by the Government consisting of three Regiments of Native Infantry and eight guns. This force was employed in the military operations against the insurgents. During this campaign Kunwar of Seraikella also assisted the Government<sup>78</sup>. Ganga Narayan and his followers were defeated in several isolated engagements. They were soon forced to '97 take refuge in the hills but being pursued there also, they fled to Singhbhum. Then Ganga Narayan endeavoured to gain over the Larka Hos who were at daggers drawn with the Thakur of Kharsawan who claimed supremacy over them. At first the Hos were not willing to join Ganga Narayan. They wished to test his ability to lead before accepting him as their leader. The Hos of this area demanded of Ganga Narayan that he should, in the first place, mount an attack on the fort of the Thakur of Kharsawan. Accordingly, he attacked the stronghold of the Ruler of Kharsawan. But Chaitan Singh, the then Ruler of Kharsawan, successfully, resisted the Hos and Ganga Narayan was killed in the engagement on 7 February, 1833. The Thakur had the pleasure of sending his head to Captain Wilkinson. This ended the Bhumij rebellion<sup>79</sup>. The quelling of all these insurrections convinced the British Government of the necessity of making new arrangements for strengthening their hold over these areas. Accordingly by Regulation XIII of 1833, South West Frontier Agency was created. Seraikella, Kharsawan and other political States such as Bonai, Gangpur, Surguja, Udaipur, Jashpur, Korea and Changbhakhar were included in the South West Frontier Agency on its creation in 1833<sup>80</sup>. *Bamanghati Dispute of Mayurbhanj and the Kuchung Problem.*

During this period a dispute started between the Bamanghati Chief and his suzerain, the Raja of Mayurbhanj. This dispute was aggravated by the division of control between the Political Agent, South West Frontier and the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals (i.e. the Cultack Commissioner). This disturbance was known as Bamanghati dispute. Due to this dispute not only the whole tribal area of Mayurbhanj, Seraikella, Kharsawan and Porahat was disturbed but it also revived the Kuchung problem between the Seraikella Chief and the Chief of Mayurbhanj. The main issue of the dispute was concerning the four pirs of Bamanghati of Mayurbhanj which were forcibly annexed by the British Company during the Kol Rebellion of 1821. In 1821, the four pirs of Bamanghati named, Thai, Bharbharia, Aula and Lallgarh were annexed by the British company and these were formed into the district

of Singhbhum. These four pirs were entirely inhabited by the Kols (the Hos) and therefore the local name for this territory was Kolhan. The remaining pirs remained under the Mayurbhanj State subject to the control of the Commissioners of Cuttack in his capacity as Superintendent of Tributary Mahals in Orissa. There was one Sarbarakhar, in charge of all these pirs. As these four pirs were included within the British territory, the Sarbarakhar, Madhu Das Mahapatra, imagined himself to be independent of the Raja of Mayurbhanj and owing allegiance only to the Agent to the Governor General on the South West Frontier in spite of the fact that he still held land within the Mayurbhanj State<sup>81</sup>.

On 3 April, 1832, the Sarbarakhar rebelled against the Raja of Mayurbhanj and burnt some of the villages near the road from Calcutta to Nagpur which passed through Midnapur and Sambalpur<sup>82</sup>. As Raja Jadunath Bhanj was not competent to deal with Sarbarakhar, G Stockwell, the Commissioner of Cuttack, marched with a company of the 47th Native Infantry. He reached Bamanghati on 10th May 1832 along with his troops in the face of severe opposition<sup>83</sup>. But this could not bring about any permanent settlement between Raja of Mayurbhanj and Madhu Das Mahapatra. Raja Jadunath Bhanj wanted full possession of Bamanghati. Hence he sought help from the tribals of the region. He feasted them and told them to plunder Bamanghati and the Dhurwa people to whom Madhu Das belonged. The Raja further told the consenting tribals that he will never demand any rent from them. Thus the Tusa Sardar, the leader of Kols of Bamanghati, circulated the arrows of war to the Larkas of Singhbhum and invited them to join this battle against the Dhurwas of Bamanghati. Consequently the Larkas of Kol pirs of Bamanghati and other pirs of Singhbhum including Rajabasa pir of Seraikella also joined this movement. The insurgents mounted an attack to Bamanghati on 6 June, 1834. They killed many people and burnt the villages<sup>84</sup>. In this way the whole of Bamanghati and Larka Ho areas adjacent to Seraikella and Kharsawan became involved in turmoil. Thus the Bamanghati incidence spread its belligerent tentacles to as far as Seraikella and Kharsawan.

Due to this Bamanghati dispute, the Kuchung problem was again revived by the Raja of Mayurbhanj which disturbed the healthy relationship between Raja Jadunath Bhanj and Kunwar Ajambar Singh of Seraikella. This Kuchung pir had been given to Raja Abhira Singh, by the then Raja Damodar Bhanj of Mayurbhanj as a gift<sup>85</sup>. But now Raja Jadunath Bhanj wanted to recapture the Kuchung pir for himself<sup>86</sup>. Thus due to this Kuchung crisis both Raja Ajambar Singh of Seraikella and Raja Jadunath Bhanj harboured ill-feeling against each other. Under



the circumstances when Raja Jadunath Bhanj instigated the tribals of Bamanghati and those of other Kol pirs of Kolhan against Madhu Das Mahapatra, the Seraikella Raja also reported to Wilkinson that the Raja of Mayurbhanj had instigated these tribals to plunder Bamanghati. These people, he said, will attack and plunder Kuchung pir of Seraikella also<sup>87</sup>. On receipt of this report the British Government warned Jadunath Bhanj, the Raja of Mayurbhanj to desist from such activities. But he counter-complained against the Raja of Seraikella that he was assisting Madhu Das Mahapatra<sup>88</sup>. The cause of levelling this allegation by the Raja of Mayurbhanj against Kunwar Ajambar Singh of Seraikella, was that when the Kols attacked Bamanghati, Madhu Das Mahapatra had left his place and had taken refuge in Seraikella. Some of his men had fled away from Bamanghati and had taken shelter in Kuchung also. Now the insurgents claimed that as the Mahapatra had taken shelter in Kuchung they would attack Kuchung pir also. This threat led the Seraikella Chief to seek the help of the British. However, in compliance with the report of the Raja of Mayurbhanj, the Kunwar of Seraikella gave assurance to the British that he would not render assistance to Mahapatra although he had given shelter to him in his State. He also reported to the British that the Hos also had plundered and burnt some of the villages of Kharsawan<sup>89</sup>. However, it was found that the Raja of Porahat was not only assisting the Mayurbhanj Raja against the Mahapatra but was also attacking both the Kunwar of Seraikella and Thakur of Kharsawan in conjunction with the Raja of Mayurbhanj<sup>90</sup>. Enmity of the Raja of Porahat with the Kunwar of Seraikella was rooted in the past. When Raja Ghanshyam Singh of Porahat placed himself under the protection of the British Company in 1820, he requested that Kunwar Abhiram Singh of Seraikella who had stolen his house-hold deity Pauri Devi be asked to restore it to him. Though the deity was restored to the Porahat family through Col. Gilbert, the Raja of Porahat had a doubt that the deity restored to him was a fake one. This matter was reported to the British but nothing was done to rectify the situation. Another cause of enmity was that the Kunwar of Seraikella did not pay any *Malguzari* to him although he considered himself to be the Chief of Singhbhum as a whole including Seraikella and Kharsawan. In his submission to the Company he had already explained that these two Chiefs were off-shoots of his branch and so he was the overlord of the whole area of Seraikella and Kharsawan also and these chiefs were vassals to him. He requested the British Company to force them to acknowledge



his authority and make payment of the *Malguzari*. But the Company could not meet his demand<sup>91</sup>. As the Raja of Porahat was not so powerful as to bring the Kunwar to book he professed to extend his moral and material support to the Raja of Mayurbhanj against the Kunwar of Seraikella. The prospective marriage during this time between his daughter and the brother of Mayurbhanj Raja also strengthened his position<sup>92</sup>. In fact, he wanted to cripple the power of the recalcitrant Kunwar of Seraikella in order to re-establish his authority over him. In this way, the Raja of Mayurbhanj, the Mahapatra of Bamanghati, the Raja of Seraikella and the Raja of Porahat made the situation very critical and the peace of the area was threatened a thing hardly to be overlooked by the expanding British power.

In the meantime, the Raja of Mayurbhanj with the assistance of the Hos of Lalgarh and Aula pir of Bamanghati, had annexed to his Raj, a place called Tetaposi. This new acquisition placed the whole Bamanghati in the possession of the Raja of Mayurbhanj. As this place was very near to Kuchung pir of Seraikella, Wilkinson feared that he might attack the above pir. Hence he ordered on 20 March, 1835-both the Rulers of Mayurbhanj and Porahat that if they attack any of the possessions of the Raja of Seraikella, they will be treated as a public enemy. But in spite of repeated warnings the insurgents of Bamanghati attacked and plundered some of the villages of Seraikella on 9 February, 1836, at the (instigation of the Rajas of Mayurbhanj and Porahat. They also attacked the Tamar and Dhalbhum. Captain Wilkinson tried to suppress the rebellion and apprehended fifty-six rebels and about four hundred heads of stolen cattle were also recovered from the marauders. He succeeded also in seizing twenty-four persons who were plundering the villages belonging to the Kunwar of Seraikella. After studying the situation Captain Wilkinson decided to post a permanent armed force at Seraikella to effectively check the attack from the insurgents of Bamanghati. So he posted an armed force of hundred men of Ramgarh under a Subedar at Seraikella<sup>93</sup>.

There was a boundary dispute between both the Rulers about the Jerai and Gidee Singra pirs also<sup>94</sup>. Captain Wilkinson thought that if he could settle the problem, there would be peace in that disturbed area. He proceeded accordingly and succeeded in finally solving the boundary dispute about Jerai and Gidee Singra pirs after thorough investigation<sup>95</sup>. Thus he tried to make an attempt at peace between the Rajas of Mayurbhanj and Seraikella.

But still there was no peace in Bamanghati. In the month of May, 1836 Mahapatra collected about 150 to 200 tribals of Lalgarh in

Bamanghati, brought them to village Goorha under Seraikella and from there plundered two villages of peringdeh pir of Bamanghati under the Mayurbhanj Raja<sup>96</sup>. This naturally enraged the Raja of Mayurbhanj. He suspected that Kunwar Ajanbar Singh had instigated Ratan Munni to attack his area. He then decided to take revenge for this by attacking 18 Kuchung<sup>97</sup>. As regards this allegation, Kunwar Ajanbar Singh explained to the Company Government that he had not sent troops to Bamanghati and it was Ratan Munni who had attacked Bamanghati at his own. However, the Raja of Seraikella was told by the British that Ratan Munni should not be allowed to enter Seraikella area as it could be considered an act of hostility between him and the Mayurbhanj Raja. In the meantime Captain Wilkinson was informed by one of his IDobhasias (interpreter) that the Mayurbhanj Raja had collected the Larka Hos of Thai and Bharbharia pirs and induced them to attack and destroy all the villages of Kuchung pir in Seraikella. These people promised to attack Kuchung pir area but the actual time of the proposed attack could not be ascertained by the Kunwar in time to ward off the danger. After that Captain Wilkinson removed Madhu Das Mahapatra from Seraikella to Kishanpur (Ranchi) in the month of February 1836. The main object of his removal from Seraikella was that Wilkinson did not want that the Mayurbhanj Raja should attack Seraikella on the plea of his presence<sup>98</sup>. Finally S. Ricketts, Superintendent, Tributary Mahals, Cuttack gave two suggestions to solve this problem. The first suggestion was that the Raja of Mayurbhanj be allowed to maintain his present possession and be given arms and ammunition to control his area, but, at the same time, he would harbour no hostile attitude towards the Kunwar of Seraikella. His second suggestion was that a military detachment be posted at Seraikella for the safety of the Kunwar on the condition that he should cease to give any support or aid to the Mahapatra of Bamanghati against, the Raja of Mayurbhanj<sup>99</sup>.

Though the dispute in Bamanghati was, for the time being, settled amicably yet the tribals of Bamanghati and the whole area adjacent to Seraikella and Kharsawan were still in ferment. They indulged in pillage and plunder and the road passing through Mayurbhanj was not safe. Persons carrying dak were occasionally attacked by these insurgents. These attacking incursions of the Larka Hos were a menace to the authorities. Wilkinson informed Ricketts on 26 May, 1836 of the dak runners being attacked by the insurgents of Lalgari and Aula pirs<sup>100</sup>. The Hos of Singhbhum had changed their strategy. They gave up direct attack and took to plundering areas inhabited by the non-tribals whom they called Dikkas (hostile elements). Following this strategy, they attacked villages

of Bamanghati but they also ravaged the Dikku villages of Seraikella, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj<sup>101</sup>. It was found that the Raja of Porahat secretly encouraged these Hos to commit depredations into British territories as well as in the neighbouring Indian States<sup>102</sup>. On the other hand, the British wanted to occupy this region for revenue purposes as the Chiefs of these areas had for various reasons failed to collect ample revenue from the Ho pirs. In 1820 it had been decided that 8 annas per working plough would be chargeable from the Hos and this was to be realised by the Chiefs of these States. But these Chiefs could collect a very small revenue from these tribal people and thus the 8 annas principle was ignored. Further, the Chiefs collected a very small proportion of the revenue from the northern pirs of Kolhan only and they could not collect any revenue from the southern pirs of Kolhan<sup>103</sup>. This involved the Ruling Chiefs of both Seraikella and Kharsawan. The Kunwar of Seraikella, annually realised from his Ho pirs only about Rs.250/- while Chaitan Singh of Kharsawan collected annually from the Ho villagee only about Rs.100/-<sup>104</sup>. Due to all these reasons Wilkinson suggested that since Singhbhum, Seraikella, Kharsawan and Mayurbhanj Rajas were unable to control the Hos in their respective territories and prevent their plundering depredations, the English should exercise direct control over the areas of the Chiefs mentioned above. This proposal was approved by the Company Government on 3rd October, 1836 and punitive measures carried out<sup>105</sup>. In this way, the British played the role of a dominant power in this area and the Ruling Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan were gradually being deprived of their authority over their own territories.

By November 1836, the Company government had the troops ready for operation chalked out by Captain Wilkinson. As per plan, Captain Wilkinson was to start with the Bankura regiment so as to reach Seraikella by November 18, 1836 to join Col. Richards, who, as Supreme Commander, entered Singhbhum with the Ramgarh Battalion<sup>106</sup>. sufficient precautions were taken to ensure speedy victory. Diplomatic moves, had also been made for obtaining absolute assurance from the Chiefs of Seraikella and Porahat and the Thakurs of Kharsawan and Kerra. These Chiefs and the Raja of Mayurbhanj were warned of dire consequences in the event of their giving shelter to the fugitives or in any way obstructing the operations. Besides this, the British agents were instructed to create cleavage amongst the Hos of different pirs and to win over some of the Mankis and the Mundas.

Before leading the forces into Thai and Bharbharia pirs Captain Wilkinson deputed several Mankis and Mundas to deliver a message of

warning to the pirs that in case they failed to deliver up the miscreants, the forces of destruction would be let loose upon them. But all these persuasions failed to induce them to agree. Wilkinson started his campaign with the troops of Seraikella who had joined him earlier on his way from Bankura. He reached the village of Ranju on the border of Thai pir on the 3rd December, 1836. The same day Captain Corfield of the 31st Native Infantry together with 300 Seraikella men attacked Pesubera, Tuibana, Kokcho and Poradiha. The brave men of these villages had assembled at Mahaburu a place seven Kms. from Kokcho, to repulse the intended attack of the British forces. These brave Larka Hos fought their freedom but were defeated. The villagers of Durang played a very heroic role and refused to surrender to the British Forces. They were, however, repulsed and thus they perished. Captain Wilkinson then entered the heart of Thai pir. The villages of this pir were destroyed. Their cattle were slaughtered and houses were burnt down. Ultimately the people of this pir had to surrender to the British<sup>107</sup>.

Captain Wilkinson next marched upon Bharbharia pir. The people of Bharbharia pir offered a stiff resistance to the advancing columns of the British forces. On the 29th December, 1836, Captain Wilkinson marched into Lalgah pir. The next day, four sardars and heads of several villages came to his camp at Angardiha and they all surrendered. He then collected all the Dhurwas of Lalgah and Aula pir who had fled away during Mayurbhanj Raja's attack in 1834. He despatched them to Seraikella under escort, so that they might not fall a victim to the Larka HOS<sup>108</sup>. On 10th January, 1837, he proceeded to Majhgaon village situated in the centre of Aula pir where several headmen and three sardars had surrendered earlier. After several attacks and much destruction other headmen of the villages also surrendered. Thus all the sardars of Lalgah and Aula pir entered into similar settlements with the Government<sup>109</sup>. From Aula pir Captain Wilkinson marched into Dumarua in Jaintgarh pir on 23 January, 1837. There he was joined by the majority of the headmen of the villages under the said pir. He asked these headmen to direct the notorious plunderers of their respective villages to surrender. But the headmen were not in a position to say anything as the plunderers had escaped into the fastnesses of the hills and jungles. On knowing this, Captain Lawrence, acting under the orders of Wilkinson, attacked Suraria post on 26th January, 1837. He succeeded in capturing some Hos who had earlier escaped. This included some women also. These women were detained till their husbands were apprehended. Similarly Captain Corfield also attacked another hiding place of the Hos, but the Hos escaped from there. He ordered his men

to search for the food grains looted by the insurgents in their many depredations. They found the hidden grains but in the meantime the Larka Hos jumped upon them from their hiding places and killed three persons. Information of this incident reached the camp of Captain Corfield and immediately the troops of Kunwar Ajambar Singh of Seraikella (who was accompanying Captain Corfield) rushed to the spot but the Larka Hos had promptly taken to their heels. A thorough search for them was ordered and finally on the 6th February, 1837, Sardar Jetong, the ring leader of the Hos who had killed the camp followers of Captain Corfield: was captured. After that all the headmen of the villages of Barandia division surrendered<sup>110</sup>.

Now wilkinson moved on to Gamaharia pir on 9th February, 1837. The headman of Gamaharia delivered to him sixteen notorious plunderers. From there he passed through Setbantri pir where a large number of headmen submitted and obeyed the orders of the Government. The achievements of Wilkinson and the demonstrations of British power struck terror into the heart of the people of the area and ultimately the other headmen who had so long held out surrendered. Thus all the Mankis and Mundas of the Kolhan pir of Bamanghau, Gumra, Barkela, Chiru, Adjandia, Chainpur, Gopinathpur, Govindpur, Kaluniapur, Seraikella, Kharsawan and Porahat surrendered. They entered into a solemn agreement pledging to obey the orders of the Company Government and not of the Rajas and Chiefs of the area. All these Mundas agreed to pay the land rent of eight anaas per plough as Malguzari to the Government, as fixed by Major Rough sedge in 1821<sup>111</sup>. Thus by the middle of February, 1837, the Kol pirs of Bamanghati and Singhbhum were brought under the direct management of the Government. These included a few villages of Seraikella and Kharsawan also. Now the name Kolhan was applied to a wider area, than the erstwhile Kolhan which included four Kol pirs of Bhamanghati only. The Kolhan as constituted now comprised the pirs of Thai, Bharbharia, Lalgah and Aula belonging to Bamanghati, Bar Pir, Satbantri, Kotgarh, Jamda, Natua, Cherai, Gumra, Barkela, "Adjandhia, Gopinathpur, Govindpur, Kallinua, Kuldiha, Rengra, Saranda and Chainpur pirs of Porahat, Rajabasa, Konchdiha, Gurlong, Abroor, Sidiu and Lota pirs belonging Kunwar of Seraikella and the Asantalia pir which comprised Vinji, Jalembra and chacha belonging to the Thakur of Kharsawann<sup>112</sup>. The total number of the Kolhan Pirs were 622. Of these, 387 belonged to the Raja of Porahat, 181 to the Mayurbhanj Raja, 51 to the Kunwar of Seraikella and 3 to the Thakur of Kharsawan<sup>113</sup>.

This newly formed Kolhan along with the entire district of Singhbhum including Seraikella and Kharsawan was included in the South West Frontier Agency and a Principal Assistant to the Governor General's Agent was placed in charge of the new division. Now Lt. Tickell, an army officer, was posted as Principal Assistant. He was the first British Administrator of this Kolhan Division with headquarters at Chaibasa in 1837<sup>114</sup>. He joined this new office on 12 May 1837.<sup>115</sup>

With the formal constitution of the Kolhan in 1837 with Lt. Tickell as its first administrator the history of the royal houses of Seraikella and Kharsawan may be said to take a new turn. From now onwards, the two houses, playing the role of British allies were systematically reduced to the position of a vassal power depending on the British for even the maintenance of law and order. It is one of the strange ironies of history that the two royal houses unwillingly had their suzerainty abridged at the hands of the rising British Power.

Though the Kolhan was brought under the direct administration of the British in 1837, the people had not willingly accepted the new dispensation. These freedom loving people, who had enjoyed freedom for ages, were neither reconciled to its loss nor could adjust themselves to the new pattern of British administration. Hence the people of south Kolhan and many others remained restless and outraged. They were again in ferment and the insurgency affected Seraikella and Kharsawan also. The insurgents rebelled under the leadership of Poto and his associates. Poto was the resident of Rajabasa pir of Seraikella. He had sterling qualities of organising people as well as of making the best use of the superstitious nature of his followers. Besides him, there were two more leaders named Bora and Debey of Balundia<sup>116</sup>. They were supported by the insurgents who had escaped from Balandia during the time of Kolhan operations<sup>117</sup>. Besides these, they were joined by some Hos who were released recently from Kishanpur (Ranchi) Jail. All these people joined as freedom fighters and in a group revolted against the British power. Poto and his associates assembled at Balandia to decide upon their future plan of action for resisting the alien Government. It was here in this war council of Balandia that it was decided to occupy the siringsia and Bagabila passes of the Singhasan Hill which bifurcate Singhbhum into two halves. Not only that, they also decided to drive away all the foreigners from Singhbhum<sup>118</sup>. In the beginning, they were able to enlist the support of only about twenty to twenty five people of the villages of Palsa and Rajabasa in Seraikella. But later on whole southern Kolhan flared up, including the inhabitants of Bar, Lalgadh and Aula pirs<sup>119</sup>.



To suppress this rebellion, the British started a military campaign against the insurgents. Captain Armstrong was entrusted with the Command of a detachment of 400 firelocksmen, 60 horsemen and 2 guns for smashing the rebellion led by Poto Sardar and his associates. 200 pykes (armed soldiers) of the Kunwar of Seraikella also joined him. Having completed all the arrangements the detachment arched from "1, Chaibasa on 17th November, 1837, and reached the village of Siringsia, one and a half Kms. from the Singhasan Hills on 18th November. But the detachment failed to crush the rebels. On 19th November, when this detachment was moving through Siringsia pass, the Hos attacked it. Thirty British soldiers were seriously wounded. Again afresh mobilization was ordered by Captain wilkinson. He directed the zamindars of Kera, Keraikella and the Thakur of Kharsawan to send their active pykes to Chaibasa. This time they moved to Rajabasa the residence of Poto Sardar. On 20th November, they attacked Rajabasa and captured the father of Poto and some of his pykes. But Poto was not found there. When the force did not find out Poto in the village, it plundered and burnt the whole village<sup>120</sup>. After that the force thoroughly searched all the possible hide outs but there was no trace of Poto and his associates. However, five ring-leaders were captured on 8 December, 1837. Finally Poto Sardar, Bora, Narra, Burrai and Pandua were also arrested<sup>121</sup>. Captain Wilkinson camped at Jagannathpur from 12th December to 3rd January, 1838. He was invested with power to try and sentence the rebels. A mock trial commenced on 25th December, 1837, and the judgement was delivered on 31st December, 1837. Poto Sardar, Narra and Burrai were hanged at Jagannathpur on 1st January, 1838, in the presence of a great number of Hos. Boro and Pandua met with the same fate only the next day in village Siringsia. Besides, many others also were sentenced to imprisonment<sup>122</sup>. Thus the five patriots sacrificed their lives and became martyrs to the cause of freedom.

The Poto rebellion and its ultimate suppression proved that the Kunwar of Seraikella and the Thakur of Kharsawan were active supporters of the alien Government and had little sympathy for the Larka Hos whom they claimed to be their subjects. The history of these two royal houses is not the history of resistance to the alien rulers. This was presumably because the Kunwar and the Thakur were anxious to maintain their suzerainty not over the area but over the people with the help of the British. Thus this suppression of Poto rebellion was a definite landmark in the advancement of British power in the area and the

consequent reduction in the absolute authority of the Kunwar and the Thakur over their respective areas.

The annexation of the four pirs of Seraikella for making up the Kolhan area left the Ruler of Seraikella discontented as it reduced his territory. It was hardly a suitable reward for Kunwar Ajamber Singh for the valuable services rendered during the Kolhan campaign. The Kunwar believed that it was a temporary arrangement and that Wilkinson would restore the pirs to him later on<sup>121</sup>. But when the Company Government awarded 500 rupees per annum to the Raja of Porahat as compensation for his Ho pirs incorporated in Kolhan, Raja Ghakradhar Singh of Seraikella also claimed the same for himself<sup>122</sup>. He explained that he did not bring forward his claim earlier in the expectation that when the area was completely subdued the villages might be restored to him. But since then so many years had passed and his hopes remained unfulfilled and so now he wanted the same allowance as was being given to the Porahat Raja. In this connection, Captain Wilkinson informed the Government on 22nd February, 1838 that the Rulers of the area were unable to control the different pirs of the Kolhan. At the same time, they were unable to check repeated plundering incursions which took place on the borders of their States as well in the British territories. The Government had warned them several times that if they could not themselves effectively keep the Hos in check the Government would take possession of the entire Kolhan. When after repeated warnings, they could not solve this problem, British forces had marched to Smighbhum and taken possession of the Kolhan. Therefore, the Chiefs of this area, he argued, had no claim for compensation. Thus the claim of the Kunwar of Seraikella was disallowed by the Government<sup>123</sup>. The net result was that the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan were reduced to the status of vassals to the Company. The Principal Assistant was directly in charge of the Kolhan and the Kunwar of Seraikella and the Thakur of Kharsawan were treated as subordinates to him<sup>124</sup>.

In the year 1839, some problem arose in Kharsawan due to the sudden demise of Thakur Chaitan Singh. Before his death, Thakur Chaitan Singh had sent an application to the Government on 4 August, 1829 requesting that in view of his prolonged illness, his eldest son, Upendra Singh might be allowed to succeed him. His younger children may be given some shares in the State. It was also requested that a Parwana be issued, guaranteeing the succession to Upendra Singh and approving the arrangement made by the dying king. Such a Parwana was sent on 8 August 1839. After this, the Thakur remained alive for

a few days and died on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1839. After his death, his wife wished to become a sati but fortunately when she was consigning herself to fire Lt. Tickell arrived and persuaded her to abandon the idea of performing sati. Thus the calamity was averted<sup>127</sup>.

After the death of Thakur Chaitan Singh, Upendra Singh succeeded him to the throne of Kharsawan, but he did not live long and ruled only for four years. He suddenly died on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1844, and again the problem of succession arose in the Kharsawan Raj family as Ganga Ram Singh, the legal successor to the throne was only eight years old. In this situation, the Government directed Captain Armstrong, Political Assistant, Singhbhum, to take measures for the management of Kharsawan State. He was told that the young Thakur being a minor, Ram Prasad, the uncle of Ganga Ram was to be the *Maufiz* (caretaker). During the minority of the Thakur, the collection of the revenue of the whole State was to be deposited into the treasury of Singhbhum<sup>128</sup>.

In 1854, the administrative structure of Chotanagpur was changed. Creation of the South West Frontier Agency had failed to improve the condition of the people, especially the tribals. Still they were in a pitiable condition being oppressed by the Thikadars and the landlords<sup>129</sup>. Singhbhum was no exception. Hence a further change was necessary. As a result, under Act XX of 1854 South West Frontier Agency was replaced by the Chotanagpur Commissioner and the designation of the Agent to the Governor General was changed to Commissioner of Chotanagpur. The officers-in-charge of Singhbhum and other districts became Deputy Commissioners. The Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum also exercised control over the States of Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>130</sup>.

As already pointed out the ruling family of Seraikella had a help to the British. But in spite of the valuable services some of its territories had been annexed and included in the Kolhan. Not only that, when the Kunwar of Seraikella, advanced his claim for allowance, it was disallowed. On the other hand the Raja of Porahat was given an allowance. This adversely affected the Kunwar's prestige. Hence to enhance his prestige the Kunwar represented to the British that as his ancestors were recognised as Rajas he should also be conferred the title of Raja<sup>131</sup>. The British enquired into the matter and it was found that if the title of Raja was conferred on the Kunwar of Seraikella, the Raja of, porahat would protest because the ruling family of Seraikella was only an offshoot of the porahat Raj. The British Government knew that if the title was conferred on the Kunwar of Seraikella an enmity would grow between these two Chiefs. At the same time it was true that

during the period of the Ho rebellions the Kanwar of Seraikella was one of the very powerful Chiefs of Singhbhum and also a staunch friend of the Company Government.<sup>12</sup> Raja Arjun Singh of Porahat actually protested against this move of the British and sent a petition requesting them not to confer the title of Raja on a junior member of his ruling family.<sup>13</sup> But it was reported to the British that since Kunwar Chakardhar Singh bore an excellent character and was regarded a man of liberal views and enlightened understandings, the title of Raja might be conferred on him.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately the Governor-General was pleased to confer on Kunwar Chakardhar Singh of Seraikella the title of Raja Bahadur on 19 February, 1856. Not only that, he was given a Khillat which consisted of a dress of seven pieces, one pearl necklace, one Jeejah and a Sirpach, one sword, one shield and a belt. For this the Kunwar had to pay a NUZZBI (presentation) of Rs. 500/- to the Government as a customary present.<sup>15</sup> Thus Kunwar Chakardhar Singh now came to be known as Raja Bahadur. This had a far-reaching effect. It enhanced the prestige of the Seraikella Chief and at the same time eroded the prestige of the Raja of Porahat. Thus there started a fresh enmity between the Chiefs of Seraikella and Porahat. The Raja of this thin— a prestige issue for himself. He was highly displeased, With the British and this was one of the reasons why in the following year, i.e., in 1857, he revolted against the British.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# FROM THE REVOLT OF 1857 TO THE DAWN OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

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The period between 1857 and 1947 marks an eventful phase in the history of both Seraikella and Kharsawan. These Princely States could not remain unaffected by the sulTings of 1857-58 which engulfed the adjoining areas. The two Rulers took the usual hostile attitude when popular uprisings broke out in Keonjhar and Borail. SelVices to the British Company that the Rulers of these Princely States were unhesitatingly extending remained unrewarded and the Government continued in a calculated manner, to tighten its noose around these States. Even then the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan continued to show their fidelity to the Company Government.

Like the people of the other parts of Bihar, the people of Singhbhum also challenged the British authority in 1857. The example of Babu Kunwar Singh goaded them to act against the British. In fact, Kunwar Singh was in correspondence with those who were conducting the movement in Chotanagpur and there was a connecting link between the risings in Chotanagpur, Shahabad, Patna, Bhagalpur and Tirhut<sup>1</sup>.

When the insurrection broke out in Bihar, the Chief military stations in Chotanagpur were Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Chaibasa and Purulia. The revolt of 1857 spread to all these places as a sequel to the uprising at Danapur. When the news of the mutiny reached Hazaribagh the troops there revolted on 30th July 1857. The Ramgarh Infantry of Ranchi, sent under the command of Lt Graham to Hazaribagh for suppressing the rebels, also revolted. The party soon returned to Ranchi to join others. The troops at Doranki also revolted. This example was followed by Purulia and Chaibasa and on 5th August, 1857, they also took to arms<sup>2</sup>. The cycle was, thus, complete and the whole of Chotanagpur was up in arms.

At the commencement of the outbreak in all the important military posts in Chotanagpur, the Hos of Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharsawan also acted swiftly<sup>3</sup>. On hearing the news of mutiny at Ranchi and

Hazaribagh, Captain Sisemore, the Principal Assistant Commissioner of Chaibasa, fled away and took shelter at Seraikella on 5 August, 1857. He took refuge for some days at the residence of the Seraikella Chief and then left for Calcutta via Raniganj with the members of his family. He was escorted by the Raja of Seraikella himself. Before leaving Singhbhum, he placed the district and the treasury under the care and protection of the Hindustani officers of the Ramgarh Battalion and the Raja of Seraikella<sup>4</sup>. During his stay at Seraikella he issued Parwanas on 5 August, 1857, through the Raja of Seraikella to the Principal Chiefs of Singhbhum for sending troops to protect the sadar station of Chaibasa. Arjun Singh, the Raja of Porahat, out of jealousy of the Chief of Seraikella (who had by then become a powerful ruler of the area and a very faithful friend of the British) refused to send in his quota of troops or even to acknowledge the genuineness of the summons<sup>5</sup>.

After the mutiny at Ranchi, the emissaries of Doranda reached Chaibasa. The main aim of the emissaries was to organise the movement in Singhbhum and to persuade the sepoys to join the rebellion and remove the government treasury to Ranchi from Chaibasa. The mutineers desired that Raja Arjun Singh of Porahat should lead them as the Raja had good influence among the Hos who held him in great esteem. During the time, Chaibasa was in ferment. One Nakfaun Mukhtar, an agent of the Raja of Porahat, was openly preaching sedition, saying that the English had left the country and that it had become the property of the Raja of Porahat. The Hos were summoned to arms. A letter was subsequently found in Porahat from this man addressed to the Raja, inviting him to come to Chaibasa and take possession. It was further reported that at Chakradharpur, the residence of the Raja of Porahat and at Ajudhia, one of the villages in his area, several Mankis and Mundas were called in and were made to swear to remain faithful to him and not to side with the Raja of Seraikella. It transpired that the Raja of Porahat even sent an emissary, Mukund Roy to Biswanath Sahu, a proclaimed rebel in Chotanagpur who had reciprocated by helping the mutineers to proceed to Chakradharpur<sup>6</sup>. The fact was that Arjun Singh had been offended when the Principal Assistant Commissioner panicky at the mutiny of troops at Hazaribagh (July 30, 1857) had left Singhbhum committing the care of the district to the Raja of Seraikella who was inferior in position to the Raja of Porahat<sup>7</sup>. However, on 3 September, 1857, the sepoys stationed at Chaibasa revolted. They robbed the treasury, broke open the Jail and set off for Ranchi to join their fellow mutineers with the contents of the treasury<sup>8</sup>. First, they attempted to get away through Seraikella and Kharsawan but being

opposed at the Ghats, they tried the Porahat route<sup>9</sup>. When they reached the banks of Sanjay river which is about 5 kms. from Chakradharpur they had to stop their march because, on the one hand, the river was in flood and, on the other, the Thakur of Kharsawan was ready to oppose them with two guns and a large number of men<sup>10</sup>. A large number of Hos also opposed the mutineers near Khumpani village which is 13 Kms north-west of Chaibasa. Since the treasury which the mutineers had robbed was the revenue collected from them, the Hos demanded it for themselves. This was the reason why the Hos gathered in thousands, out of all stragglers and harried them continuously. Thus the sepoys found themselves surrounded by a mass of Hos on one side and a swollen river on the other and the Thakur of Kharsawan and his men<sup>11</sup>. In the meantime the sepoys received an invitation from Raja Arjun Singh of Porahat to join him and make over to him the greater part of the money taken from the Chaibasa treasury. Thus they crossed the river at other points on elephants provided by Raja Arjun Singh. They were taken to Chakradharpur where they were fed and allowed to keep guard over their arms. This act of Arjun Singh annoyed the British but the people approved of the act of the Raja. A proclamation was made by the agent of the Raja in the Bazar of Chaibasa on 11th or 12th September, 1857 that "every thing belongs to God, that the country belongs to the king and that the ruler of their is Arjun Singh<sup>12</sup>. This was all due to the jealousy caused to the Raja of Porahat at the importance given to the State of Seraikella by the British.

During this critical time, Lt. Birch was appointed by the Government Assistant Commissioner of Singhbhum in place of Major Sissemore who had already left the place when the uprising started at Chaibasa. Lt. Birch reached Seraikella on 13 September 1857. But before reaching Seraikella, he had already issued Parwanas from Raniganj asking for the co-operation and assistance of the well-disposed Chiefs of Singhbhum. Raja Arjun Singh was also requested to join him but Lt. Birch had not received a clear reply from him. Lt. Birch, on his arrival at Seraikella, first made a demonstration against the Raja of Porahat with the help of the Seraikella troops. But he had to remove the troops as he was informed that Raja Arjun Singh had armed his troops well and had sent Jaggu Diwan to Ajallua with troops. Not only that the Raja of Porahat had circulated an arrow, the emblem of war, among the Hos, asking them to oppose the British. Lt. Birch, after strengthening his position with the support of the Raja of Seraikella, ordered his troops to proceed to Chaibasa on 16th September, 1857<sup>13</sup>. Lt. Birch reached Chaibasa with Captain Oakes, the faithful Raja of Seraikella, the Thakur



of Kharsawan and 3,000 Hos and reoccupied Chaibasa<sup>14</sup>. Having reoccupied Chaibasa, he asked the Raja of Porahat to deliver himself up, restore the government treasury and make over the rebellious sepoys. He also sent a deputation consisting of the uncle of the Thakur of Kharswan, the Mukhtear of the Raja of Keonjhar and Babu Raghubar Singh, a friend and relation of the Porahat Raja to instill in the Raja confidence for the British and to assure him that no injury or insult was intended towards him. They saw the Raja but were unable to accomplish their task. However, it seems that the parwanas sent by Lt. Birch and the recapture of Chaibasa had alarmed Raja Arjun Singh. Thus on 17 September, 1857, Raja Arjun Singh sent a request to Lt. Birch apologising for having neglected to reply to the letter sent by him and regretting that sickness and fear of his enemies had prevented him from paying attention towards him. After a day or two again, he wrote to Lt. Birch stating his loyalty and also that he had apprehended an attack from the Raja of Seraikella. All these, he wrote, had forced him to take up arms and side with the mutineers<sup>15</sup>. However, when Raja Arjun Singh did not appear personally before Birch, he was declared a rebel on 23 September 1857. A reward of Rs. 100/- was announced for his arrest and all his property was declared confiscated by the British. After this declaration, Arjun Singh informed Lt. Birch that he was ready to surrender the sepoys and the treasury at Chaibasa. But he changed his plan on 25 September, 1857 and informed Lt. Birch that as his enemies infested the roads, he would not visit Chaibasa but would surrender at Ranchi. Now he proceeded to Ranchi on 11th October, 1857 to surrender the treasury and the mutineers. Due to the absence of Col. Dalton, he was received by Captain Davis. Dalton, however, asked him to go back and surrender to Lt. Birch at Chaibasa<sup>16</sup>.

Arjun Singh after his return to Chakradharpur found his State confiscated and in the possession of a Government Officer named Babu Ginish Chandra Pandit. He then removed the ladies of his family for their security from Chakradharpur to Porahat, another residence of the Raj family, and made Jaggu Diwan in-charge of the security at Chakradharpur. Jaggu Diwan attacked the Government Officers and drove them away from Chakradharpur. This action of Jaggu Diwan made it clear that Arjun Singh had become a rebel. Now Lt. Birch was convinced that Arjun Singh would not tender himself. So he decided to take action against him. Thus on 20 October, 1857, Lt. Birch accompanied by Captain Hale with a force attacked Chakradharpur and occupied it. Jaggu Diwan was caught and hanged. The same force attacked Porahat the next day, but

Arjun Singh escaped from his residence. The British troops plundered the Raja's house and the adjoining areas<sup>17</sup>. During this campaign the Chief of Seraikella gave great assistance to LL Birch<sup>18</sup>. This Porahat episode was again a proof that the State of Seraikella was playing an important role in the area as an ally of the British. By the end of December 1857 E.H Lushington, Officiating, Commissioner of Burdwan had been temporarily appointed Special Commissioner of Manbhum and Singhbhum<sup>19</sup>. About this time Baijnath Singh, the brother of Arjun Singh and Raghu Deo, the Diwan of the Raja of Porahat also joined the movement. This strengthened the position of the rebels. The Thakur of Kera had supported the Senior Assistant during Porahat campaign. On this account he was marked out as the first object of vengeance. His house and the adjoining Bazar were attacked and plundered by the insurgents. After that they marched to Ajudhia village. When Lushington was informed on 24 December, 1857, that about 2000 rebels had assembled at Ajudhia under Baijnath Singh, he with a body of Sikh Soldiers under Captain Hale and troops of the Seraikella Raja attacked them on 25 December 1857 and dispersed them<sup>20</sup>.

By the end of December that year the condition of the district deteriorated and the whole of Kolhan was in revolt. These rebels attacked Jainigarh police station and murdered a Jamadar and two barkandazes. Though the British force moved on 14 January, 1858, and captured two sardars of Jainigarh concerned with this outrage, it was attacked by the rebels and the Larka Hos at Mongra river while returning to Chaibasa. This sudden attack resulted in severe injury to several European officers accompanying the Sikh detachment. About the same time, an assault was mounted by the rebels on Chakradharpur, the residence of the Porahat Raja, now occupied by the Chief of Seraikella. Though the Chief of Seraikella was protected by a force of 300 matchlockmen and two guns, he was driven out by the insurgents from Chakradharpur<sup>21</sup>.

These incidents encouraged the insurgents and reduced the prestige of the British. Now it was felt that without reinforcements the insurrection could not be effectively quelled. Accordingly the Shekhawati Battalion, then at Raniganj under Colonel Foster was ordered to march to Chaibasa. Col. Foster reached Chaibasa with the Shekhawati Battalion and hundred European soldiers on 17 January, 1858. He at once proceeded towards Chakradharpur and Porahat where the insurgents were assembled. At the news of the coming of the British force, the rebels dispersed leaving their stronghold. But some of the insurgents assembled at Siringella pass. Col. Foster with a detachment of troops

succeeded in driving away these insurgents. Many of them were killed and some took refuge in the jungles and the hills. Several other small expeditions against the insurgents were undertaken by Foster and thus by the end of February 1858, tranquility seemed to have been restored to the area. Captain Dalton now assumed charge of the Commissionership of Manbhum and Singhbhum from Lushington who returned to Calcutta in February 1858. The Sekhawati Battalion was sent off to Sambalpur<sup>22</sup>.

The Raja of Porahat, however, still held out, though many efforts were made to induce him to surrender. His State was consequently confiscated on 9 February 1858 but the Hos of the area still clung to him and kept up their resistance<sup>23</sup>. On 26 March, 1858, a body of 2,000 Hos under Baijnath Singh attacked Chakradharpur, but they were beaten back by the small garrison<sup>24</sup>. In April, another attack was made by the insurgents but they were also defeated by a part of the naval Brigade at Chakradharpur supported by the troops of Seraikella. On this occasion thirty of the rebels were taken prisoners<sup>25</sup>.

After this long struggle, Captain Dalton planned another strategy for capturing Arjun Singh and the other insurgents. He posted a party of Kharsawan pykes at Porahat to intercept fugitives and facilitate communication between Lt. Birch's camp and Captain Dalton's camp. Similarly, he compelled the Mayurbhanj Raja, the father-in-law of Arjun Singh, to take up a position in front of his camp at Karaikela, feeling sure that when pressed by Birch's party Arjun Singh would be compelled to surrender to his father-in-law<sup>26</sup>. This was exactly what happened. On 10th February some of the insurgents surrendered. After that followed the capture of Kunwar Baijnath Singh. Lastly, on the night of 15 February, 1859 Arjun Singh, being hard pressed, decided to go to his father-in-law at Karaikella. Thus on 16 February, 1859 he surrendered and was immediately brought to Dalton's camp at Chakradharpur. After the surrender, Arjun Singh along with his family was sent to Banaras in December 1859 as a state prisoner under surveillance. The surrender of Arjun Singh at once put an end to the disturbances<sup>27</sup>.

In this way, during the mutiny of 1857, the Chief of Seraikella and the Chief of Kharsawan rendered valuable services to the British. While returning to Calcutta after handing over the charge of Commissionership of Singhbhum and Manbhum in February 1858 Lushington appreciated the services of the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>28</sup>. Similarly, the Governor-General of India, Lord Cannings, also acknowledged the services of Seraikella Chief during the mutiny and recommended his

name to the Court of Directors for granting a khilla<sup>29</sup>. Ultimately by the order of the Governor-General, dated, 22 January, 1858, Raja Chakardhar Singh of Seraikella was given a Khillat or robe of honour for his services rendered to the Government during the mutiny<sup>30</sup>. This khillat consisted of a pearl necklace with a diamond sirpach, a pair of diamond armlets, a gold hunting watch, gold guard chana, pair of gold-worked shawls, one square shawl, one piece of Khamkhab, one Bandaasi Dopatta and one Chandari Turban. Besides this he was given one revolver, twelve guns and Rs. 2000/- cash. Similarly, Government presented a pair of shawls to Thakur Ganga Ram Singh of Kharsawan for his loyal services during the mutiny<sup>31</sup>.

Not only that, Government decided to make grants from the lands of Porahat which had already been confiscated in 1858 to those who had rendered valuable services during the uprising of 1857. Hence under recondation made by the Commissioner of Chotanagpur in his letter on J no. 2 dated 19 October 1859 and approved by the Government of Bengal in their letter No.6331, dated 7 November 1859, the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan and others were confirmed in the possession of grants of lands from the Porahat State. Finally a Sanad was issued on 31 May, 1860 in favour of Raja Chakardhar Singh Bahadur, Chief of Saikella, granting Karakella Pargana of Porahat consisting of villages. On the other hand, on the same date Raja Ganga Ram Singh, Chief of Kharsawan, was also issued a sanad by the Government in which he was given four villages named Setuhaka, Semudra, Dalki and Samraich as rent free grant in perpetuity. Similarly, the village of Bhalupani was given as a grant to Kunwar Jagannath Singh, a brother of the Raja of Seraikella, rent free in perpetuity. Rangrit village was granted to Babu Pitamber Singh, another brother of the Raja of Seraikella, rent free in perpetuity. Asantalia village was granted to Ramchandra Pradhan rent free for life. Rajgaon village was granted to Gangadhar Pradhan rent free for life and Naku village was granted to Babu Ajay "171 Nath Singh rent free in perpetuity<sup>32</sup>.

In this way those who had rendered services to the British and had helped them in putting down the uprising of 1857 were honoured and given grants of lands for their loyalty to the British. This dismemberment of the State of Arjun Singh, the last Porahat ruler, meant a gain to Seraikella in a big way and a gain, small but momentous, to Kharsawan too. At this stage of the history of the two States it may be noted that their territorial jurisdiction was extended to cover the Porahat area and their ambition of a show down with Porahat was fulfilled. It may be

noted that the two states had acted wisely to appropriate power to themselves. But they were ignorant of the fact that they were merely pawns in the British game.

### **Keonjhar Rebellion And Seraikella State**

The net outcome of the 1857 movement in Singhbhum was that the Chief of Seraikella now became a powerful Ruler of this area and wherever there was an uprising, the British sought his help. This was what exactly happened during the Keonjhar rebellion. In the month of March 1861, the then Raja of Keonjhar died, and a dispute about succession arose<sup>33</sup>. The Rani of the Late Ruler of Keonjhar did not bear a son but the Raja's "Phulbahi"<sup>34</sup> wife had a son named Dhanurajaya. Ravenshaw, the then Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals, Cuttack, decided in favour of Dhanurajaya. But the dowager queen declared Dhanurajaya to be unfit for the gadlee. She declared that Brindaban, grandson of the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, had been adopted by her husband as son before his death. This led to the problem of a succession. The Government of Bengal recognised Dhanurajaya as the Raja of Keonjhar and arrangements were made for his education at Cuttack, as he was a minor at that time. He attained majority in 1867. In September, 1867 all the Bhuiyan Sardars) , (headmen) of the Keonjhar State were brought to Cuttack to profess allegiance to the new Raja, but one important Sardar named Ratna Naik refused to come and he openly declared himself in favour of Brindaban. Thus the Bhuiyans became divided into two groups. One group supported Dhanurajaya's succession while the other was in favour of Brindaban. Ratna Naik was the leader of the Second group. The defection of the Bhuiyan Sardars posed a serious problem as the Bhuiyans claimed the right of installing the Rajas of Keonjhar. The widow Rani and Ratna Naik were openly inciting the people not to recognise Dhanurajaya as the Raja. On 5th December, 1867, Ravenshaw arrived at Keonjhar-garh with Dhanurajaya. He installed Dhanurajaya as the Raja of Keonjhar, but most of the Bhuiyan Sardars did not attend the function. In January, 1868, the Rani left Keonjhar for Puri as a gesture of protest against Dhanurajaya's installation as the Raja by Ravenshaw. This posed a problem to the British, especially because of the numerous followers of the Rani including Ratna Naik. Under these circumstances, the British sought help from Raja Chakardhar Singh of Seraikella because he was the brother of the widow Rani of Keonjhar. Now Col. Dalton, Commissioner of Chotanagpur, came to Kenojhar with the brother of the Rani, Raja Chakardhar Singh, who put pressure on her. Raja Chakardhar Singh used his influence to induce his sister to end her

opposition to Dhanurajaya as the Raja of Keonjhar and ultimately she agreed to return to Keonjhar. On 13 February 1868, Dhanurjaya was installed for the second time. This time, the Bhuiyans performed the customary installation ceremony in the presence of the Rani and the Commissioner of Orissa and Chotanagpur<sup>35</sup>.

Things again took a very different turn when the peace of the area was disturbed as about 22,000 Bhuiyans, Kols and Juangs joined hands and rebelled against the Ruler of Keonjhar. The cause of this uprising was the suppression of Nanda Dhal, the Diwan of Keonjhar, who had sympathised with the Bhuiyans who had earlier defied Dhanurjaya. They plundered Keonjhar Bazar and some adjoining villages. Not only that, they besieged the palace and captured the Diwan and fifty persons of the Raja and carried them off as hostages to compel the Government to install Brindaban Bhanj as the Raja of Keonjhar. Col. Dalton blamed the Diwan for the outbreak. On the other hand, Ravenshaw suspected the widow Rani of Keonjhar and the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. He warned them not to encourage the insurgents<sup>36</sup>. But the situation remained liquid. The Raja appealed to the British for help. The Government deputed Dr. Hays Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, to Keonjhar. Major Graham also marched with a detachment of troops to assist Dr. Hays. Col. Dalton, Commissioner of Chotanagpur, also despatched a force under Lt. Hunter. Towards the end of June 1868, Col. Dalton himself reached Keonjhar with a detachment of troops. Ravenshaw also arrived at Keonjhar on 7th July, 1868, with the Madras Native Infantry. The chiefs of Mayurbhumj, Pallahra and Udaipur in Chotanagpur furnished contingents of Paiks to reinforce the Government troops<sup>37</sup>. Similarly Raja Chakardhar Singh of Seraikella also gave assistance during this campaign<sup>38</sup>. Due to this joint operation the insurgents were suppressed. It was not possible for them, armed only with bows, axes and swords to fight the Government troops equipped with modern weapons. Ultimately, most of the Bhuiyan Sardars surrendered on 15 August, 1868. Ratna Naik was captured along with some of his followers. With the capture of Ratna Naik and his followers the uprising came to an end<sup>39</sup>.

The tribals, however, were still dissatisfied. They rebelled again against the Ruler of Keonjhar and thus the second Keonjhar uprising took place in 1891. The Raja arrested some persons who had agitated against forced labour without payment. These labourers petitioned the Superintendent, Tributary Mahals, Cuttack, against the Raja. This enraged the Raja who arrested those labourers who were involved in the said petitioning. This led to the second Keonjhar uprising of 1891. Dhamidhar, one Bhuiyan youngman, was the leader of this uprising. He



looted the grain stores of the Raja. He procured even a cannon and some muskets. On 12 May, 1891, about 500 Bhuiyans attacked the palace at Keonjhar. Though they were repulsed, the Raja had to flee to Anandpur. He proceeded to Cuttack to meet the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals who sent a detachment of military police with him. Dhanidhar was arrested and sent to the Cuttack jail. In February, 1895, all the Bhuiyan insurgents including Dhanidhar were sentenced to various terms of rigorous imprisonment. Thus the second uprising of 1891 of Bhuiyans of Keonjhar came to an end<sup>40</sup>. Raja Udit Narayan Singh<sup>41</sup> of Seraikella gave military help to quell this Keonjhar uprising. He had sent a detachment of troops including thirty men and sixteen horses<sup>42</sup>. These valuable services during the Keonjhar uprising the British appreciated and presented a sporting gun and a rifle to him<sup>43</sup>.

The Keonjhar uprisings and their ultimate suppression by the British once again proved the fact that the Raja of Seraikella was a valuable ally of the British. He had enhanced his prestige by rendering timely military assistance to the British whenever required to do so. The British appreciated these services and reciprocated the sentiments from time to time.

#### **Birsait Movement and Seraikella and Kharsawan**

The gradual penetration of the British into Chotanagpur and the neighbouring areas dissatisfied the people of the whole area. Though the pre-1857 movements of the Hos and Santhals of Chotanagpur and the tribal-uprisings of Keonjhar in 1868 and 1891 were suppressed by the Company government, upheaval did not fully subside. The discontent among the different sections of the tribals assumed the form of a more formidable movement known as the Birsait movement, under the leadership of Birsa, a Munda leader of Chalkad in Tamar Thana of Ranchi district<sup>44</sup>.

When Birsa Movement began the Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi sought the co-operation of his counterpart in Singhbhum, precautionary measures were taken so that the tension may not spread. The neighbouring zamindars were asked not to allow the Hos to join the rebels. Similar instructions were sent to the Thakur of Kharsawan who was just on the borders of Khunti<sup>45</sup>.

On 22 December, 1899, a meeting of the Birsites was held at Kotagam<sup>46</sup> in the fastnesses of Singhbhum. In this meeting, it was decided that widespread acts of terrorism would be started on the eve of Christmas that year. Birsa deputed many persons to various places in Khunti and Singhbhum. Accordingly Dore was deputed to Karaikela of Seraikella State, Kate to Chaibasa, Chamon to Chakardharpur, Soma to Bandgaon.

Molga to Sangra, Borai to Kunkrugutu in Singhbhum. Thus, the epidemic of burning and arrow-shooting broke out as scheduled on the Christmas Eve. On 24 December, 1899, the followers of Birsa attacked and burnt a number of villages in north Singhbhum<sup>47</sup>. The commissioner of Chotanagpur made frantic efforts to arrest Birsa and his followers. The "Beat and Search" operations were launched on 13 January, 1900. The Commissioner proceeded to Bandgaon on the 13th to conduct the operation personally. The Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum had arrived there earlier on 8 January, 1900. With the arrival of the Commissioner, stringent punitive measures against the followers of Birsa got momentum. The movement appeared strong in Bandgaon and Chakardharpur areas. Kumar Nairpat Singh of Porahat actively assisted in the operation against Birsa. Similarly the Raja of Seraikella sent twenty-five policemen to assist in capturing Birsa but they were returned with thanks and he was asked to watch his own pargana of Seraikella and catch any Birsais who might have strayed into his domain. The Tahsildar of Karaikela Seraik State was also asked to keep watch over the passes leading into the hills and jungles in his jurisdiction<sup>48</sup>. Due to all these extensive measures, Birsa took shelter into the jungles of Singhbhum and probably he entered the Rogod village on the border of Karaikella Pargana and wanted to escape into one of the native States which was the safest place for him<sup>49</sup>. But on 3 February, 1900, he was cleverly traced by some spies and arrested with his two wives in one of the deep jungle recesses of Singhbhum. He was at once brought to the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum camping at Bandgaon. The captors were paid cash reward of Rs. 500/- Birsa was sent to Ranchi under a guard of military police and confined into jail where he died on 9 June, 1900<sup>50</sup>. The history of the beginning and the spread of Birsa Movement in Singhbhum shows that although the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan remained loyal to the British as ever, the people remained dissatisfied. The history of Seraikella and Kharsawan was thus, not only the history of the two royal houses, but the history of the continuing struggle of the people to remain free from British control. On the other hand, the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan were given some sanads by the British Government.

These two States had rendered valuable services to the British during the various uprisings including those of 1857 and 1899. The first sanad was granted on 8 March, 1899, by Lord Curzon to Raja Udit Narmayan Singh Deo Bahadur, Chief of Seraikella and Thakur Mahendra Nath Singh Deo, Chief of Kharsawan. In the sanad, their powers, positions and status were defined with reference to the British Government. It

was recorded in this sanad that the Chiefs were recognised as feudatory Chiefs. They had to receive the succession right from the Governor-General of India. No succession would be valid until it was recognised by the Governor-General. The Chiefs had to appoint officials in their States by the orders of the British Government. Each successor had to pay *Nazarana* to the British. Similarly, the rulers were given instructions by the Lt Governor of Bengal as regards the administration of justice. Not only that, they had to consult and seek advice from the Commissioner of Chotanagpur regarding the imposition of taxes, collection of revenue and excise etc. These rulers were so handicapped through this sanad that they could not catch even the elephants from the jungles without the permission of the British<sup>51</sup>. Thus, the British seized the powers of the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan in a calculated manner.

The result of the aforesaid sanad was that both the States came under the sphere of British influence. Constitutionally the States of India, including Seraikella and Kharsawan, were not part of British India nor were their inhabitants British subjects. But due to these sanads the British Government assumed the guardianship of minor princes and also arranged for the administration of the States during such a minority. Now the rulers did not inherit their Gaddi as aright, but as gift from the paramount powers<sup>52</sup>. Thus both the Rulers became ineffective and nominal rulers. The fact was that the British became the paramount power in India including these two States.

However, when the First World War brokeout in 1914 the British Government wanted co-operation and assistance in War efforts from the Princes and Chiefs of Indias<sup>53</sup>. Therefore the Government now slightly relaxed its hold over the Chiefs of the Princely States. The ruling Chiefs were granted various sanads giving them some privileges, e.g., the right of adoption of heirs so that their houses would continue. Accordingly, Thakur Sri Ram Chandra Singh Deo, Chief of Kharsawans<sup>54</sup> and Raja Udit Narayan Singh Deo of Seraikella were also granted a sanad of adoption by Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India on 15 October 1914. The sanads granted in 1899 to the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan were superseded by a revised sanad granted on 15 May, 1915 by Hardinge, the then Viceroy and Governor-General of India. It was different from the previous ones. As Bihar and Orissa separated from Bengal in 1912, the Chiefs now received instructions from the Lt.Governor of Bihar and Orissa "while in the sanad of 1899 they received instructi from the Lt.Governor of Bengal. In this sanad of 1915, the Lt.Governor of Bihar and Orissa was authorised to recognise successions on behalf of the Governor-General. The clause in the 1899 sanad about payment of *nazarana* on succession

was omitted in the new sanad<sup>55</sup>. In this way though the British Government kept their control over the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan, the Government allowed some relaxations during the first world war as they needed their help in war efforts. On 17 March, 1917, a meeting was held under the presidency of Sir E.A.Gait, Lt. Governor of Bihar and Orissa, at Patna Collegiate School. It was organised in support of the Indian War Loan. In this meeting many Rajas and zamundars of Bihar and Orissa promised to contribute towards the War loan fund. The Raja of Seraikella expressed his willingness to subscribe twenty-five thousand rupees and the Thakur of Kharsawan promised fifteen thousand rupees<sup>56</sup>. After that, the Ruler of Seraikella contributed about a lakh of rupees to the War Loan during the period 1914-18. In addition to these, a large number of labourers worked in the forest for supply of timber to Mesopotamia<sup>57</sup>. In recognition of the above friendly gestures of help, on 4 June, 1917 Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India, granted a sanad to Raja Bahadur Udit Narayan Singh Deo, Chief of Seraikella and Thakur Ramchandra Singh Deo, Chief of Kharsawan, the title of Raja<sup>58</sup>. As the Chief of Kharsawan was for the first time granted the title of Raja, Lt. Governor himself presented it to the Ruler. On 10 September, 1917 at 5 P.M., at a Darbar held at Governor's House, Ranchi, the hereditary title of Raja was conferred upon Ramchandra Singh Deo, the Chief of Kharsawan State by E.A.Gait. Sir E.A.Gait conferred the title and congratulated him and wished him success in life. On 11 September, 1917, Sir Gait also granted an interview to Raja Sri Ram Chandra Singh Deo<sup>59</sup>.

During this period, though the British Government wanted help from the Rulers, it interfered in internal administration in an attempt to snatch the powers of the Rulers through these sanads. Due to this, the ruling Chief of Seraikella had already submitted a memorial in 1901 protesting against the grant of sanad, but his prayer was rejected by the Government<sup>60</sup>. The other rulers of India also nursed resentment against the interference of the British Government in their internal affairs. Hence all these rulers met in a conference of the ruling princes and Chiefs at Delhi in January 1919. In this conference, it was decided that the rulers should have full and unrestricted powers of civil and criminal jurisdiction in their respective States<sup>61</sup>. This conference paved the way for the formation of the Chamber of Princes in future. Due to this move of the ruling Chiefs, the British Government decided not to interfere in the internal administration of the States. Thus the British Government granted a fresh sanad on 3 November 1919, to the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan. In the new sanad they were given some relaxation and thus

the specific control of the Government over the appointment of State officials was withdrawn and the clauses limiting the right to catch elephants were omitted. Now, the importance of the Seraikella State increased gradually. Raja Udit Narayan Singh Deo, was very old and had ruled since 1884 when he was installed on the Galdi. The British Government conferred the title of Maharaja on Raja Bahadur Udit Narayan Singh Deo in the year 1922 as a personal distinction in recognition of his just and enlightened administration of his State for 39 years<sup>62</sup>. On 11 December, 1931 Maharaja Udit Narayan Singh Deo died and was succeeded by his grand son Raja Aditya Pratap Singh Deo as his eldest son Nrup Raj Singh Deo predeceased him<sup>63</sup>.

### **Formation of the Eastern States Agency**

From time to time the States of Seraikella and Kharswan were placed under different administrative agencies for administrative convenience. Since the creation of the Chotanagpur Commissionery in 1854, these two States were placed under the Commissioner of Chotanagpur and their relationship was regulated through the agency of the Deputy Commissioner who was ex-officio Political Agent for the States till 1916. But in 1916 these States were transferred from Chotanagpur Commissionership and now the Political Agent, Orissa Feudatory States at Sambalpur, became the Political Agent of these two States<sup>64</sup>. Thus these two States were transferred from Chotanagpur Commissionery to the group of Orissa Feudatory States. But after some years the British decided to form a group of all the States of Eastern India. Hence, from 1st April, 1933, all the States of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and the Central Provinces were incorporated under an administrative unit which was termed as the Eastern States Agency under an Agent to the Governor General whose headquarters was temporarily located at Ranchi<sup>65</sup>. It comprised all the forty States of Eastern India including those of Seraikella and Kharsawan. The larger States including Seraikella, was brought under the direct political charge of the Agent to the Governor General. But the smaller States, including Kharsawan, were placed under the political charge of the Secretary to the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States and the Political Agent at Sambalpur. All these States except those of Kharsawan, Kankar and Seraikella paid tribute to the British Government<sup>66</sup>.

The British Government further granted a revised sanad to all the States in 1936. As a result, the relationship of Seraikella and Kharsawan with the British Government came to be regulated by this new sanad. Seraikella, a bigger State, was treated as "A" class State and enjoyed full powers of

internal administration. The Kharsawan sanad was also revised but the state was treated as a Class 'B' State. As Seraikella State was a Class A State and enjoyed full powers of internal administration, the Ruler was admitted to the chamber of Princes in 1940-41. Kharsawan being a Class- B State, its Ruler was not admitted to the Chamber of Princes<sup>67</sup>.

These administrative changes and the formation of the Eastern States Agency were a part of the British Plan to mobilise the available resources for the purposes of war. This also explains the British anxiety to have greater and more effective control over the States. This anxiety was reflected in the interference of the Government in the internal affairs of the States. When protest came up against this increasing interference, the British very shrewdly revised the sanads by granting a few concessions to them. Thus, the First world War witnessed the emergence of Seraikella as a more powerful, more important and more influential State than Kharsawan. Perhaps this was a prize given to Seraikella for its substantial help to the war efforts. Although Kharsawan also came up with help, it could not match the help extended by Seraikella and was, therefore, relegated to an inferior position of a 'B' grade State.

When the second world war broke out in 1939, the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan again gave their willing assistance to the British government in their war efforts. The Ruler of Seraikella placed at the disposal of the government, all resources of the State and his personal services. The total investment made by him in the purchase of the National Savings Certificates and war loans etc. amounted to Rs. 1,00,671/-. The Raja also contributed a sum of Rs. 16,260/- including the cost of two Ambulance cars. The Seraikella Ruler made a gift of 42 lakhs of 'Bidis' (country cigarettes) to the Indian soldiers servicing overseas. This was highly appreciated. Some woollen goods worth about Rs.600/- were also sent to the soldiers. The Seraikella Glass works supplied 14,86,000 Sq.ft.sheet of glass to the Defence Department of India, at controlled rates. Similarly, the mining department of the Seraikella State supplied 1,008 tons of asbestos, 3,509 tones of Kynite and 330 tons of Chrome minerals for war purposes. The Forest Department of the State also supplied 571 wagons of props, 324 wagons of fire wood and 26,545 pieces of shovel handles to the army<sup>68</sup>.

The Ruler of Kharsawan State also contributed to the war fund. In the year 1941-42, he contributed a sum of Rs. 1,631/- to the Viceroy's war fund. About 21, 103 tons of Kynite were also supplied for war purposes to the British. Besides, contributions were made for the purchase of Defence savings Certificates and other certificates<sup>69</sup>. Again in the



year 1943-44, the Ruler of Kharsawan invested Rs. 900/- in Defence Bonds and Rs. 282/5/3 paise were donated to war fund. Rupees 340/9/ annas were given as donation to the Red Cross Fund. About 12,416 tons of were supplied to the British and the S.A. from this state<sup>70</sup>. In way of these States contributed considerable sums and showed their continued fidelity to the British Government. This also shows that these two States functioned as vassals to the paramount British power and were completely dependent upon the British Government for their continued existence. As such, the contributions to the war made by these two States meant an implicit submission to the British Government and the continued decay of power.

### **The Indian Freedom Movement and the Seraikella and Kharsawan States**

The gigantic political upheaval for freedom from foreign domination in other parts of the Country influenced the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan also. The misrule and the poor financial condition of these two States created the necessary background for popular agitation against the Ruler. But the fear of repression by the Rulers kept the people off from any open movement. Unrest, however, burst out when other parts of the country revolted. The people of these two States knew the fact that without getting freedom from the Rulers they could not get freedom from British imperialism. All these reasons led the people of these two States to join the national movement against the British. But compared to other parts of India the movement began much later and it influenced the general movement in a very limited sense. For the freedom struggle in Seraikella and Kharsawan, it was the leaders of Orissa who set the pace<sup>71</sup>. In the beginning of the 20th century when the freedom was getting momentum in the country, Pandit Gopabandhu Das of Orissa entered the scene of Seraikella, Kharsawan and other parts of Singhbhum and influenced the people of this region. He was associated with Gandhiji and encouraged the people against the British Raj. Born and brought up in Orissa and an eminent national leader, he is regarded as 'Singhbhumir Gopabandhu' meaning Gopabandhu of singhbhum. His great cultural and political work influenced Singhbhum. He was an active member of 'Utkal- Sammelan', an organisation of Orissa founded in 1903 in Ganjam. The main object of this organisation was to have a separate State for Orissa, which was then a part of Bihar<sup>72</sup>. This organisation wanted to include for all the adjoining Oriya speaking States in Orissa<sup>73</sup>. In 1917, a meeting was held at Sambalpur

in Orissa in which a resolution to this effect was passed and it was decided that efforts should be made for the propagation of Oriya in Singhbhum. For achieving this goal Gopabandhu Das visited Singhbhum in the year 1917 and thus heralded a new era in this region<sup>74</sup>.

As Gopabandhu was an associate of Gandhiji -he went from place to place with some co-workers and Preached the message of the Mahatma. In course of his tours he visited Seraikella and Kharsawan also in 1917. At Seraikella a big meeting was held in front of the royal palace. During this period, the Court language of the Seraikella and Kharsawan states was Hindi. He personally consulted the Rulers of both the States and thus Oriya replaced Hindi as the court language. Not only that, many Oriya schools were opened in both the States. In the year 1918 an Oriya school was opened at Chakradharpur. The same year in the name of Pandit Gopabandhu Das a school was founded by Devendra Tripathy in village Tentaposi. In the Chakradharpur school founded by Gopabandhu, besides general education, students were imparted basic training. They were taught agriculture well as weaving through 'Charkha' (spinning wheel) so that the education might help them in future. About hundred 'charkhas' were used in the school and these were mostly manufactured in the Tentaposi village of Seraikella state<sup>75</sup>. In the year, 1919 Gopabandhu brought Godabarish Misra, an eminent social worker from Orissa to Chakradharpur and made him Headmaster of Chakradharpur school. With the help of Godabarish Misra he infused in the people of Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharsawan a spirit of learning and a love of freedom<sup>76</sup>.

Gopabandhu's work regarding the development of Oriya culture among the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan as well as in the district of Singhbhum awakened the people. Gopabandhu and his organisation, Utkal Sammilini become more and more popular among the students of Gopabandhu. The main current of the people's thought and movement were carried on through the Utkal Sammilini till 1920<sup>77</sup>. At Nagpur in the year 1920, Gandhiji authorised Gopabandhu to spearhead the Non-Co-operation movement in his region. To achieve this, at the Chakradharpur Session of the Utkal Sammilini in 1921, it was decided to merge it with the Indian National Congress. Thus this organisation under Gopabandhu's leadership gave support to Gandhiji's new movement of Non-Co-operation under the banner of the Indian National Congress<sup>78</sup>. For achieving the goal, Gopabandhu visited many places of Singhbhum and preached the message of Gandhiji. However, due to his anti-British activities, the Government restricted his movement. Ultimately, a false criminal case was instituted against him and in May

1922, he was sent to prison for two years. He was lodged in the Hazaribagh Central jail. After the expiry of his term of imprisonment he returned to Cuttack. In 1926 Lala Lajpat Rai invited him for becoming a member of "Servants of the people's society". In 1928 he was selected the Vice-President of the society at its annual session at Lahore. But unfortunately he could not survive. On 27 June, 1928, he died at the age of 51<sup>79</sup>. Though Gopabandhu died, yet his memory and magnificent services in diverse fields of National life ever remained fresh in the minds of Seraikella, Kharsawan and Singhbhum people.

### **Haribaba Movement**

After the movement started by Gopabandhu Das, Seraikella and Kharsawan did not remain calm and quiet. In the year 1930-31 a movement started in the northern parts of Singhbhum and spread to Seraikella and Kharsawan also. This movement was led by one Duka Ho called Haribaba. He became a religious leader of the Hos and the Santhals. Duka directed his activities against the Bongas (Spirits) and his followers cut down the trees of the sacred grove in which the Desauli spirit dwell. The Haribabaites took their Thursday off. Vegetarianism was the rules and drinking was prohibited. The movement, apparently an operation against spirits was not without a political undertone. Haribaba sought to unite the tribals of this region in a movement which aimed at expelling the Hindu foreigners and at restoring to the aboriginal people their pristine rule over the lands and forests of Chotanagpur. The names of Haribaba and Gandhiji were mixed up. He proclaimed himself one of the most intimate disciples of Gandhiji. Behind this movement lay a century of agrarian strife and turmoils also. Haribaba wanted to do away with the proprietors excesses also. The movement spread all over Chotanagpur on account of its political undertone. This threatened the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan also because the movement was agrarian in nature and sought to oust the foreign elements from the lands of the Hos. In the year 1930, a large number of the Hos assembled in Kharsawan and organised a meeting against excesses. Thus the Rulers were threatened and they sought help from the British. Ultimately a British Indian Armed Police force came from Chaiabasa and this movement was suppressed without any serious incident. After some time, this movement subsided with the arrest of Haribaba. Though this petty movement subsided, it encouraged the people of this area against alien exploitation and foreign rule<sup>80</sup>.

It aroused a feeling not only of belonging but also of patriotism among the tribal people and ultimately led to their joining the freedom struggle led by Gandhiji.

### **Praja Mandal Movement**

After 1930, the people of this region were influenced by the political activities in the neighbouring areas of Chaibasa, Jamshedpur and the states of Orissa. Many nationalist leaders visited Chaibasa. Among them Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were notable and they roused the people of this region<sup>81</sup>. As Chaibasa is only 30 Kms. from Seraikella and it borders on both Seraikella and Kharsawan, activities of the people of this place influenced Seraikella and Kharsawan also. Similarly Jamshedpur which is also border town of Seraikella and Kharsawan influenced the people of these two states. Jamshedpur, a big industrial town, was visited by all the nationalist leaders, such as pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Subhas Chandra Bose. Manek Horni, a lawyer of Jamshedpur, tried to instill in people a spirit of revolt against the British<sup>82</sup>. In the month of March 1930 he was arrested on the charge of instigating a riot and afterwards he was enlarged on bail on the condition that he would stay away from the place until his trial. He tried to stage a hartal (strike) in Tata's works on 27 March, 1930, but he failed in the attempt.

During this period, the people of Jamshedpur were busy in the civil disobedience movement of Gandhiji. This agitation spread not only to the neighbouring districts of Manbhum and Singhbhum only but to the adjoining districts also<sup>83</sup>. Many people of Seraikella and Kharsawan were working in Jamshedpur<sup>84</sup>. These people must have been influenced by the national movements. When these labourers came to their homes, they brought the ideas of national movement to the people of their area.

During the period, the people of different States in India also revolted against the feudal rule of the princes. The spirit affected these two States also and the people organised themselves into an organisation known as Praja Mandal. Baroda State of Gujrat was probably the first to form such an organisation. Its example was soon followed by the people of other princely states including Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>85</sup>.

In the year 1944, the British Government was informed Harbans Singh Kamana, an active member of the revolutionist organisation of Kirti and Ghadar party of Punjab was going to Jamshedpur. This man seemed to have had an extraordinary career. The British Government wanted to keep him away from Jamshedpur. Further the political department of the Government wanted the Seraikella authorities to keep him away from Seraikella State also<sup>86</sup>. Harbans Singh Kamana visited Jamshedpur and the political activities increased there. As many workers of Jamshedpur lived in Seraikella State, there was a reasonable case for expelling him or else he would influence the people of Seraikella. Due to this reason, the Government decided to expel him from Jamshedpur.

as well as from Seraikella<sup>87</sup>. But Harbans Singh Kamana did not stay for long in Jamshedpur. He very soon returned to Punjab and the proposed externment order from Seraikella state was cancelled then<sup>88</sup>.

Similarly in the same year, in the month of November, another extremist named M.D. S. Madan influenced the people of Jamshedpur. He was a Parsi youngman and had a considerable influence over the staff of Tata Iron and steel Company and the young Parsis at Jamshedpur. Hence the Government issued an order dated 10 November, 1944, that he be interned from the Seraikella State<sup>89</sup>. After some time, on 12 November, 1944 M.D. S. Madan was arrested at Jamshedpur and sentenced for one year's imprisonment. Under these circumstances, the Government decided that it was now not necessary to pass any order for his internment from Seraikella and the last order dated, 10 November, 1944, should be treated as cancelled<sup>90</sup>. These activities, however, awakened the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan and they could no longer keep silent. By the middle of 1946, under the banner of Praja Mandal, the people of these two states also launched an agitation against the Rulers. Many people of different places in Seraikella and Kharsawan joined this movement. Madhusudan Acharya, Dhanu Manjhi, Kandan Manjhi, Markandi Nand, N. Jyotishi and Rajnikant Satpathi were the main leaders of the Seraikella and Kharsawan States, Hiralal Pattnaik, and Jagdish Sahu were the main leaders of Kharsawan Praja Mandal organisation. Besides these, Brindhan Manjhi of Kandra, Jain Chaudhary of Gamarana, Umapati Tripathi of Keri were also the main members of the movement<sup>91</sup>. The agitation was peaceful. The members took out processions and held meetings in both the States. All the people whether a Bengali, a Bihari or an Oriya assembled at these meetings and participated in the movements. Some times the rulers adopted a revengeful attitude towards these people. The people had equipped themselves with bows and arrows and long clubs. Though the forces of the rulers were equipped with gun, the members of the Praja Mandal would not fear them. These people always shouted some slogans such as :

Dell se Aai Awaj, Seraikella Raj ko  
Karo Nipat,  
Netaji ka Dhal Talwar  
Inklab Jindabad!

and

'Andheri Saasan Dhwans Ho,  
Praja Rajya Kayam karo'.

which means - "A voice had come from Delhi-Down with Seraikella State. The sword and the shield of Netaji,

Proclaimed-long live the revolution."

and

"The oppressive rule should be destroyed and the rule of the people installed"<sup>92</sup>.

Bijay Kumar Pati of Singhbhum was also the leader of this Praja Mandal Movement<sup>93</sup>. The neighbouring States had also Praja Mandal movements. There was a link between the freedom-fighters of these States and those of other States. Pubitra Mohan Pradhan who was the leader of the Talcher and Dhenkanal Praja Mandal was also actively associated with the Praja Mandal of Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>94</sup>. Some other nationalist leaders of Orissa, such as, Biswanath Das, Muli Choudhary Sarangdhar Das, Surendra Dwivedi, Ravi Ghosh, Harekrishna Mahtab, etc. also helped this movement in one way or the other. Srikrishna Singh, the first Chief Minister of Bihar and Shil Bhadra Yaji, the forward Bloc leader and an associate of Subhash Chandra Bose were also connected with these movements of Seraikella and Kharsawan. Rajnikant Saipathi, President of this Praja Mandal movement, had a link with the national leaders. He visited two or three times Delhi to meet the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Dhanu Manjhi, another active tribal member of this movement, had met Gandhiji at Chaibasa. He had met Pandit Nehru at Cuttack and when he visited Delhi he met Dr. Rajendra Prasad also. Sardar Patel helped these people indirectly from time to time<sup>95</sup>.

Thus the Praja Mandal movements of Seraikella and Kharsawan not only opposed the Rulers of these States but also the British administration. However, when the Cabinet Mission suggested that the Indian States should also merge in India, Seraikella and Kharsawan did not agree with the proposal<sup>96</sup>. At long last by the Instrument of Accession, most of the States of India, including Seraikella and Kharsawan acceded to the Dominion of India. On 15 August, 1947, the Indian National Flag was hoisted in all the Residencies all over India and thus Seraikella and Kharsawan were released from all their obligations to the British crown<sup>97</sup>.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

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# **SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN IN THE POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD : 1947-1956**

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### **The Merger Problem**

The Post-independence history of Seraikella and Kharsawan is primarily the history of their amalgamation, first with Orissa State and subsequently with the State of Bihar. During this period, movements were initiated both by the pro-Orissa supporters and the pro-Bihar supporters claiming the merger of these two States. After several agitation and representations, it was the State Reorganisation Commission which finally decided the matter in favour of their merger with Bihar in 1956.

With the dawn of freedom arose the problem of the integration of the Indian States including Seraikella and Kharsawan. The Government of India had a plan to merge the Indian States with the adjacent Provinces for better administration and economic welfare of the people of those areas. Thus the problem of the merger of Seraikella and Kharsawan States also arose. But before solving this problem there arose another problem in these States. As stated earlier, before independence, the States of Seraikella and Kharsawan were included in the Orissa Feudatory States of Eastern States Agency. There were twenty-six States in this group. These Orissa feudatory States along with the Chhattisgarh States numbering fifteen did not want to merge with the adjoining erstwhile British provinces. Some of the rulers of these States had been thinking in terms of a confederation. This can be traced back to the proposals of the Cabinet Mission of 1946 regarding a new constitution for independent India. After this announcement some of the feudatory Chiefs of the Orissa and Chhattisgarh States, had been thinking in terms of a confederation. These Rulers met at Raj Kumar College, Raipur, and formed the Eastern States Union which started functioning from 1st August, 1947. Some of the bigger States like Mayurbhanj and Ratanpur, as well as some of the smaller States, had kept out of it. This union had an elaborate constitution with a Premier,

a Chief Secretary, a joint police organisation under Inspector General of Police and an appellate Court, but had no legislature. It was financed by contributions from the constituent States. The joint police organisation was headed by an Englishman and the police force contained a large number of Pathans and Punjabi Muslims. One could easily feel the effect upon public opinion of the employment of such a force against the background of the communal situation in the country in the latter part of 1947. If it was decided to dissolve the Eastern States Union, a possible alternative would have been to form one union of the Orissa States and another of the Chhattisgarh States. But neither of these unions would have the requisite resources to maintain a reasonable standard of administration. Another alternative was that the Orissa States would merge with Orissa province and Chhattisgarh States with the Central Provinces. The Government of India was in favour of this alternative<sup>1</sup>.

However, to solve these problems Sardar Patel, the then incharge of the States Department decided to go to secure the merger of Orissa States with the province of Orissa as in the second week of December, 1947 he invited all the Rulers of Orissa States for discussion at Cuttack<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, on 13 December, 1947 Sardar Patel along with V.P. Menon, Secretary, Ministry of States, went to Cuttack. After much discussion with the smaller and bigger States of Orissa regarding their merger, they agreed to merge with Orissa. Thus the Rulers of Orissa States including Seraikella and Kharsawan signed the agreement in December, 1947, with the Government of India whereby they ceded and surrendered all their authority, privileges, jurisdiction and power to the latter. In this Agreement, it was mentioned that both the States of Seraikella and Kharsawan would be administered by the Government of Orissa from 1 January, 1948, and from the said day all the provisions of the agreement would be effective<sup>3</sup>.

After this merger, arose the problem of fixation of Privy purses to the Rulers. In the merger-agreement there was a provision for the payment of privy purse as compensation. Such allowances were not to be terminated with the then Rulers but were to be continued to their successors also. The Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan were given privy purses as compensation. The Ruler of Seraikella got Rs. 88,900/- while the Ruler of Kharsawan received Rs. 33,000/- only as privy purses annually. This amount was intended to cover all the expenses of the Rulers and their family, including expenses on account of their residences, marriages and other ceremonies etc. and could neither be increased nor reduced for any reasons whatever<sup>4</sup>. In this way the problems of merger and privy purses were solved.



After completing the work of merger of the Orissa States, Sardar Patel and Mr. Menon returned to Delhi on 16 December, 1947. At Delhi Mr. Menon explained the situation and the circumstances to Gandhiji and Mr. Nehru in which the merger agreements were signed. In due course, the Cabinet approved the agreement relating to the merger of Orissa and Chatusgarh States. On 23 December, 1947, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section 2, of section 3 of the extra Provincial Jurisdiction Act, 1947 (No. VLVII of 1947), the Government of India delegated to the Government of Orissa the power to administer the Orissa States including Seraikella and Kharsawan in the same manner as the districts in that province. The central functions were reserved for the Government of India. It was, however, provided that the exercise of the power thus delegated would be subject to the control of the Central Government and that this delegation of authority would not preclude the Central Government from exercising the power thereby delegated<sup>5</sup>.

But the merger of these two States with Orissa could not end the problem. Soon after this merger, an agitation was set afoot in Seraikella and Kharsawan for their merger with Bihar on the ground that the majority of the population were tribals and that geographically the two States were parts of the Singhbhum district of Bihar<sup>6</sup>. According to the pro-Bihar supporters, the decision of the Government of India regarding the merger of these two States with Orissa was *ex parte* decision in favour of Orissa. In the Conference which was held at Cuttack on 14 December 1947, though both the representatives of Bihar and Orissa were invited, unfortunately due to flood and on account of non-availability of aeroplane services, the representative's of Bihar could not reach Cuttack in time. Thus in the absence of Bihar's representatives, Sardar Patel and Menon merged these two erstwhile States with Orissa. This decision was very much disliked by the people of Bihar. In that conference the Raja of Kharsawan had also pointed out that his State was surrounded by the Singhbhum district of Bihar and that the tribals were anxious that the State should merge with the Bihar province. But V.P. Menon, Secretary, Ministry of States, suggested that he should first agree to merge with Orissa and that the wishes of the people regarding ultimate merger of that States with Bihar or Orissa could be ascertained lateron. The Raja of Kharsawan then agreed to the merger with Orissa on this assurance<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, immediately after signing the agreement at Cuttack some of the Rulers of Orissa conspired to revive the Union movement. They set up a secret organisation and concentrated their activities in Seraikella and Kharsawan, the administration of which had been made

over to Orissa. As Bihar also claimed these States, naturally a controversy arose between Bihar and Orissa. In this situation the conspiring Rulers found an opportunity to carry on their activities in Seraikella for the revival of the Union<sup>8</sup>. This situation formed the bone of contention between the two neighbouring provinces. Orissa was anxious to retain these States while Bihar wanted to draw them into its fold. The Rajas also took part in this controversy, so that for some time the administration in both these erstwhile States could only be carried on with the help of the military police<sup>9</sup>. When it was decided that these two States should merge with Orissa, the Orissa Government decided to send a force to control the situation before taking over these two States. Hence on 18 December, 1947, Orissa Government sent three companies of armed police with the officers of Orissa to Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>10</sup>. But the people of these two erstwhile States were struck with terror at the sight of the arrival of these forces. They thought it was a forceful merger with Orissa while some people wanted it to merge with Bihar. The result was disastrous.

On the day, i.e. 1st January, 1948, when the Orissa Government sent their Magistrates and the Police to take over charge of these two erstwhile States, there were massive demonstrations against the assumption of the charge. At both the places, Seraikella and Kharsawan, thousands of people, particularly the tribals, took out processions and held demonstrations with bows and arrows. At Kharsawan the Orissa police fired on the demonstrations resulting in several deaths<sup>11</sup>. This firing was condemned by many people of the country. Sardar Patel in his speech at a public meeting in Calcutta on 3 January, 1948, condemned the Kharsawan firing<sup>12</sup>. After this firing, the Adibasi Mahasabha of Chotanagpur, a social organisation organised meetings and rallies in different parts of Chotanagpur and condemned the Kharsawan firing. On 11 January, 1948, it organised a meeting at Chaibasa and on 18 January, 1948, at Jamshedpur. At Ranchi, in a rally which was held on 14 January, 1948, Jaipal Singh, President, Adibasi Mahasabha also condemned the firing. In his speech at the rally he said that these erstwhile states were geographically, linguistically, ethnically and administratively an integral part of Chotanagpur. After this speech, the people stood up and kept two minutes silence in memory of the people who were killed on the New Year's day at Kharsawan. Not only that, a Kharsawan Relief Fund was created with Misrilal Jain, a landlord of Chaibasa as treasurer, Hari Charan Soy was the Secretary and Jaipal Singh, the Chairman of this Relief Committee. This Committee helped the victims of the firing<sup>13</sup>.

The Kharsawan firing gave an opportunity to the pro-Bihar Supporters.

After this incident of 1 January, 1948, a strong movement started in Kharsawan and Seraikella for convincing the Central Government as regards the transfer of these two erstwhile States to Bihar, of which these had been integral parts. In view of this unseemly controversy, the Government of India thought it wise to appoint a Judge of the Bombay High Court to finally adjudicate on the question of integration with reference to (a) the consent of the people (b) the historical, geographical, ethnological and linguistic considerations, and also (c) the economic and administrative considerations. Hence, the Ministry of States, Government of India, in their resolution No.F.2(35)-P/48, dated, New Delhi, the 7th April, 1948, appointed Justice Baidkar of Bombay High Court to adjudicate upon the rival claims of Bihar and Orissa over these two States. The Decision, however, was soon replaced by another whereby the Central Government was to decide this case instead of the Judge<sup>14</sup>. Thus this case was further reconsidered by the Central Government. Both the representatives of the Government of Bihar and Orissa were called to Delhi. V.P. Menon and Sardar Patel heard their cases patiently<sup>15</sup>. After hearing both sides, Government of India further considered the case and it was realised that on account of the situation of these two States as two islands in Singhbhum district, it was impossible for any Government other than that responsible for the administration of that district to administer them effectively. The Government of India accordingly took over from the Government of Orissa the administration of these two erstwhile States and made it over to the Government of Bihar on 18 May, 1948<sup>16</sup>.

When both the erstwhile States were merged with Bihar, the pre-Orissa people felt disheartened. The Raja of Seraikella wrote a letter to Sardar Patel on 16 June, 1949, stating that it was a wrong step of the Government of India and was against the agreement of December 1947 in which they had decided to merge Seraikella with Orissa. In his letter he requested for the merger of these erstwhile States with Orissa. Not only that, he submitted a memorandum to the Governor General of India stating that his state was transferred to Bihar without his consent. He further stated that the merger with Bihar was illegal as the State Ministry had announced a plebiscite and had actually appointed a judge of the High Court of Bombay for solving the problem. He, therefore, demanded that the same procedure might now be adopted as early as possible, if it was the desire of the Government to ascertain the wishes of the people<sup>17</sup>.

On 28 July 1949 a goodwill Mission of Koshalotkal Praja Parishad of Orissa came to Seraikella to enquire into the suppression of Oriya language and culture and the wishes of the people as regards integration

The mission consisted of R.N.Singh Deo, Maharaja of Purna (Orissa), and leader of the Mission, Ram Prasad Mishra, working President of the Committee, Raj Ballav Mishra, Secretary of the Committee, Surendra Mohanty, Editor, Janta, Cuttack, Sri Sundarmoni Patel member of the committee. During their visit they visited both the areas and acquainted themselves of the actual situation. The Mission returned on 31 July, 1949. After Visiting different places in Seraikella and Kharsawan, the Mission in its report recommended that these two States should immediately be transferred to Orissa as they were historically, politically and culturally a part of Orissa<sup>18</sup>. However, in spite of the several representations against this merger, the Government of India did not take any action. They stood by their decision. Finally, the merger of Seraikella and Kharsawan with Bihar was confirmed by a Government order called, "The State-merger (Governor's Provinces order)" dated 27 July, 1949. In this order these two erstwhile States were finally merged with Bihar and according to the order merger was made effective on and from 1 August, 1949<sup>19</sup>. Though the Deputy commissioner of Singhbhum assumed Charge of the administration of Seraikella and Kharsawan on 18 May, 1949, they were finally and constitutionally merged with Bihar on 1 August, 1949. Since then these erstwhile States have been constituted into a Subdivision of Bihar and named as Seraikella Kharsawan Sub-division within the district of Singhbhum under a Sub-Divisional Officer<sup>20</sup>.

Resentment among the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan against the merger was, however, still there. As these areas remerged in Bihar, the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan towns observed Hartal (strike) on 1 August, 1949, the Bihar Government arrested about twenty five persons including prominent citizens, workers of the popular parties and members of Seraikella and Kharsawan Congress Committee and Seraikella Praja Samity. Similarly on 2 August, 1949, some people were arrested and taken to the police station. These arrested persons were allegedly assaulted also<sup>21</sup>. After this, Secretary, Seraikella committee and some other organisations jointly sent a telegram to the Governor-General of India and the Ministry of Fies. The erstwhile Ruler of Seraikella State, A.P. Singh Deo also wrote a letter on 7 August, 1949 to Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India and criticised the Bihar Government's inhuman policy towards the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan. He demanded that an impartial inquiry be instituted and such inhuman oppression be terminated. A copy of the same letter was forwarded to V. P.Menon, Adviser, Ministry of States, Government of India also<sup>22</sup>. Raja AP. Singh Deo wrote a letter to M.K. Vellodi, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of States, New

Delhi, on 24 September, 1949, explaining that these States had been included in Bihar without consulting the people as well as the Rulers. He further said that due to the oppressive attitude of the Bihar Government it was impossible for the people of these areas to remain in Bihar and the merger of these areas with Orissa was the only solution and the sooner it was done the better for all concerned<sup>23</sup>. A few citizens of Seraikella and Kharsawan also submitted a memorandum to Rajgopalachari, Governor General of India on 3 December, 1949. In this memorandum they explained that these States were originally in the Orissa states of Eastern Agency. These, 3 were first integrated with the province of Orissa in the agreement of December 1947. They demanded that these two erstwhile states be transferred to Orissa according to the common wishes of the people<sup>24</sup>. Thus there was much resentment among the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan as regards the merger of the area with Bihar.

However, in spite of all these representations, these two areas merged with Bihar. The Government of Bihar took special care for the education of the children and introduced Hindi in the schools of Seraikella and Kharsawan. Hindi teachers were appointed in the schools of these areas. But the people of these areas considered this as an attempt to suppress Oriya. They complained that most of the Oriya teachers of their area were replaced by Hindi teachers and cited several cases in support of their complaint. From Nrupraj H.E. School of Seraikella some Oriya teachers had been transferred to Chaibasa and Hindi teachers had been brought in their place. Similarly in Rani Padmini Kumari Girls M.E. School, Seraikella, three Oriya teachers had been replaced by Hindi teachers<sup>25</sup> similarly in Kharsawan, the Headmaster of Amda M.E. School and Headmaster M.E. School of Kharsawan, both Oriya teachers, were transferred and Hindi knowing Headmasters were appointed in their places<sup>26</sup>. In Karaikella, Adityapur, Rajanagar, Dumurdiha and also some of the Oriya teachers had been replaced by Hindi teachers: "Not only that, the Oriya medium schools of Adityapur, Rajnagar, Kharsawan, Kita, Dugni and Rajbandh of Seraikella town, Barabamboo and many others had been converted into Hindi Medium schools<sup>27</sup>. Thus the introduction of Hindi teaching in some schools, transfer of some teachers out of Seraikella and Kharsawan and the appointment of Hindi knowing teachers in some of the schools naturally created resentment among the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan. The Bihar Government had, therefore, to issue a Press Note, dated 12 September, 1949, denying the allegation of suppression of Oriya culture and claiming that considerable improvement had been effected in all the existing Oriya schools. The

press Note further stated that in none of the schools Oriya language had been replaced by Hindi and that teaching in the girls' school of Seraikella was not being done through the medium of Hindi. On the contrary the school itself had been raised to the middle standard by the Government. However, in spite of all these movements in the election of 1951-52, Mihir Kabi was elected member of the Bihar Assembly from the Seraikella Kharsawan constituency<sup>28</sup>.

### **S.R.C. and Seraikella and Kharsawan**

Just after the announcement of the formation of the States Reorganisation commission(S.R.C.) some pro-Orissa People thought of the retransfer of these areas from Bihar to Orissa. The Commission brought a new hope to these people. This led to a series of movements in these areas. A public meeting was organised by the people of Seraikella on the occasion of the death anniversary of Kumar S.N. Singh Deo, the fourth son of the Raja of Seraikella. The date of the meeting was fixed on 7 February, 1954. The Raja of Balangir Patna (in Orissa) and Pandit Godawari Misra, a Social leader of Orissa and Maharaja of Kalahandi (erstwhile State of Orissa) came to Seraikella and participated in this meeting. The meeting started under the Presidentship of the Maharaja of Balangir Patna. The people attending the meeting heard his speech peacefully but when he referred to the question of merger with Orissa a large part of the audience rose and indulged the brickbating. Due to this, the visitors from Orissa and the Raja of Seraikella left the meeting. No further incidents were reported. After that Lopo Deogam, a tribal leader, addressed the people gathered there and once more voiced the determination of the people to remain with Bihar. There were different opinions about the people responsible for causing disturbance. The pro-Bihar supporters' versions was that the said brick-batting had been started by some people who had collected in the neighbouring office building of the Seraikella Municipality. The pro-Orissa supporters' version was that brickbats were thrown by the opponents of the merger with Orissa. According to them, these people responsible for the disturbances were not those of Seraikella but had come from Jamshedpur specially to create disturbances. However, this incident did not have wide-spread repercussions, because already Magistrates had been deputed and a few police Inspectors and Constables were also sent by the Government of Bihar for the safe conduct of the meeting<sup>29</sup>.

All these incidents took place during the period when the States Reorganisation Commission had already started functioning. It issued a



Press Note on 23 February, 1954, inviting written memorandum from members of the public<sup>30</sup>. Just after this announcement, Raja A.P. Singh Deo, erstwhile Ruler of Seraikella state, submitted a memorandum to the S.R.C. in May 1954. In this memorandum the Raja explained that historically and linguistically these states belonged to Orissa and the people of the area wanted the merger of the two States with Orissa<sup>31</sup>. Similarly P. K. Deo, Maharaja of Kalahandi in Orissa, submitted a memorandum to the S.R.C. in which he stated that transfer of the entire district of Singhbhum including Seraikella and Kharsawan with Orissa be effected<sup>32</sup> the other hand, Baldev Sahay, resident Bihar Association also presented a memorandum to S.R.C. In memorandum he claimed that the entire area of Singhbhum including Seraikella and Kharsawan had been an integral part of Bihar and Chotanagpur throughout the British period and there was no reason now to change this position<sup>33</sup>. Besides these claims and counter claims for re-merger with Orissa, Nalini Kangan Sarkar, presented a memorandum putting forward claims for merger of these two states with Bengal<sup>34</sup>. However, in spite of all these memoranda, the members of the commission started visiting different parts of the country on 8 April 1954 to examine the various memoranda received by them and covered virtually the entire country and visited about 104 places in the country<sup>35</sup>. During their tours the members of S.R.C. visited Bihar also to study the people's opinion. Thus Pandit H.N.Kunzru, and Sardar K.M.Pannikar visited Bihar from 29 January, 1955 to 9 February, 1955. During their tours they visited Patna, Purnia, Kishanganj, Dumka, Dhanbad, Purulia, Ranchi, Chaibasa, Kharsawan, Seraikella and Jamshedpur<sup>36</sup>.

Pandit H.N. Kunzru and Sardar Pannikar, after visiting other places in Bihar, reached Chaibasa on 7 February, 1955 at 8.45 P.M. From Chaibasa the S.R.C. reached Kharsawan at 10 A.M. on 8 February, 1955. They were greeted by the people all along the twenty-eight km. route. In between Chaibasa and Kharsawan, demonstrators on road side shouted the slogan, Orissa Jari Kaho, Bihar Jari Abua meaning "we would not go to Orissa, we would remain in Bihar." They also carried posters and playcards containing such slogans. There were a good number of pro-Jharkhand demonstrators at Kharsawan also. There was a demonstration, a few miles off from a village called Burudih on the seventh Km. stone from Seraikella, demanding merger of the area with Orissa. On arrival at Kharsawan, the members were greeted by a huge congregation numbering about twenty-five thousand. There were about eight groups of deputaionists at Kharsawan. Among, them, six were stated to be pro-Bihar and two of them supported Orissa's claims. There was no

deputation on behalf of the Jharkhandis. Raja Ram Chandra Singh Deo of Kharsawan and Yubraj P.N.Singh Deo were among the first to enter the Kharsawan Rest House to Pandit Kunzru and Sardar, Pannikar the 11 same day. They placed before them several 19th. century old Sanads and documents to show that Kharsawan was an integral part of Chotanagpur and its Court language was Hindi. The area was in no way connected with Orissa, they said. They showed some sanads, issued in the 19th. century, pointing out that it was a part of Singhbhum and Chotanagpur. Other grounds on which they opposed merger of Kharsawan with Orissa were the following.

Firstly, the headquarters of Orissa, in the event of transfer, would be 188 Kms. off. Secondly there was no communication between Kharsawan and Orissa headquarters. Thirdly, the majority of people belonging to the Ho tribe and Kurmis were Hindi speaking. Lastly, there was a negligible percentage of Oriya speakers. Raja Sahab opposed Orissa's demand on geographical, economic, cultural, linguistic and other grounds too. He said that people's wishes were overwhelmingly against the transfer of the area to Orissa.

Another delegation of 31 persons representing Kurmi Mahasabha, Merchants, Muslims of Kharsawan led by Sri Salendra Narayan Singh, Vice-president, Sub-divisional congress committee, deposed before the Commission. Regarding association of Seraikella and Kharsawan with Orissa they mentioned that those areas were always part of Singhbhum and Chotanagpur even in British days. Questioned by the Commission regarding the language of the local people the spokesman of the delegation said that over sixty percent of the population belonged to tribal class who spoke their own language and also Hindi. Among the remaining forty percent Hindi speakers were in considerable majority. They said that the number of Oriya speaking community was hardly five percent. The Court language, they added, was Hindi. Even under Orissa, Governments rule, they pointed out several documents were written in Devnagri and Kaithi scripts showing that the official language of the place was Hindi. Questioned about the percentage of the Bengali speaking people, the deputationists stated that they were even less than Oriya speaking people. Economically, they said, thousands of people of the area worked in Tatanagar, Jhinkpani, Chaibasa and Chakradharpur factories. They feared difficulties for these workers if the area was included in Orissa because the nearest town in Orissa was more than 151 Kms. away without direct road or railway communication. They also mentioned that the

culture of the people was purely of Bihar. Wishes of the people, they said, were definitely against merger with Orissa.

The Singhbhum District Bar Association, the Adimjati Sewa Mandal and people's representatives led by Sheonath Pandey, refuted with facts and figures the details given in 1951 census regarding the number of Bengali and Oriya speaking people. They said that not more than one or two percent had Bengali or Oriya as their mother tongue. They urged not to transfer any area to Orissa or Bengal against the people's wishes. Shamu Charan Tubid, the Singhbhum District Board Chairman, represented his District Board before the S.R.C. and mentioned that the number of Oriya and Bengali students was small. Asked by the S.R.C. he also detailed the composition of the population in the district and said that it consisted mostly of the tribals, S Kurmis, Mahtos, Tantis, Gwalas and other minor communities. Bengali and Oriyas were very small in numbers. The pro-Orissa delegation led by P.K. Acharya and including thirty others also deposed before the commission and said that the area was pre-dominantly Oriya speaking. They admitted that the tribals were in majority but according to them they were indifferent to the inclusion of the area either in Bihar or in Orissa. Another Oriya delegation lead by J.N. Acharya, a reputed legal practitioner of Chaibasa and brother of P.K. Acharya, supported his brother's stand. The Commission then left for Seraikella.

At Seraikella, the Raja A.P. Singh Deo, Yuvraj Satvanu Singh Deo, and Tikant N.N. Singh Deo were the first to depose before the states reorganisation commission. They advocated merger of Seraikella with Orissa, the ground for which, they refused to disclose. Rani Lakshmi Devi, wife of the second brother of the Raja of Seraikella and Bhola Nath Kar, strongly opposed the merger move. Mihir Kabi, M.L.A., led a delegation of thirty persons including representatives of Uikal Samitee, Adivasi Sabha, Praja Mandal and advocated merger of Seraikella and Kharsawan with Orissa. A thirty-five men delegation of the Congress led by Banbihari Mahato, President of Seraikella Congress committee, met the commission and said that the court language of Seraikella was Hindi and the headquarters of the District was Chaibasa. They also said that the transfer-deeds were written in Hindi. Even the 'Ho' community used to have their transfer-deeds in Hindi. The representative of the Ho community, Surendra Basuki, said that their language was more near to Maghi. He pleaded for status quo as regards the State and vehemently opposed the demand of Orissa.

A joint delegation of Kurmi Kshatriya Association and the Singhbhum Praja Socialist Party led by Gangadhar Mahato produced

before the commission some old documents of the period from 1820 to 1926, which were all in Hindi. It further said that it did not want any change in the existing arrangements. A seven men delegation of M.L.A's and others led by Suku Hembrom advocated the merger of Singhbhum with Jharkhand for the welfare of the Ho community in both Bihar and Orissa. The Harijan Sevak Sangh and Backward Class Federation in a joint delegation of sixteen persons opposed transfer of any part of Singhbhum to Orissa or Bengal. They said that their language was Hindi though they also spoke their own dialects. Similarly representatives of Panchayat parishad, Kurmikhauriya Sabha, Oriya Samaj, Harijans, Mazdoors, Backward Class Merchants Association, tenure-holders and the Bar Association, in a joint delegation of thirty-one persons, including a lady Srimati Lakshmi Devi, led by Bhuvaneshwar Mahanth met the commission and strongly protested against the merger move. They pointed out that there were administrative difficulties and that Orissa's claim did not stand on any reasonable ground.

After visiting Seraikella and Kharsawan, the S.R.C. members arrived at Jamshedpur in the evening by car from Seraikella on 8 February, 1955, on the last leg of their tour of Bihar. At Jamshedpur, several delegations met the members of the commission. One delegation led by Michael Jones, President Tata workers Union met the S.R.C. and said that public opinion was against the merger with either Bengal or Orissa. Another delegation which included the representatives of the Dhalbhum Hitaisi Samity led by P.C. Ghose, President Jamshedpur Bar Association, demanded the transfer of Dhalbhum Sub-division of Singhbhum district to West Bengal. On the other hand, the Jharkhand party delegation led by T. Bodra, M.P., pleaded for a separate Jharkhand state on the grounds of administrative convenience, economic development, geographical situations and cultural, ethnological and political unity. The Depressed class League and Harijan sevak sangh led by one Sri Ahuja met the commission jointly and opposed the demand of Jharkhand<sup>37</sup>. In this way the S.R.C. members visited Seraikella and Kharsawan and other places of the district of Singhbhum and they heard their views sympathetically.

The commission presented its report to the Government in 1955. As regards Seraikella and Kharsawan, it found that Orissa's claim to these areas rested mainly on the ground that Oriya was the largest single language group. The two States had formed part of the Singhbhum district since May, 1948. The historical affinities for those two States with the Porahat Raj in Singhbhum district on the one hand and with the administration which was in charge of the Chotanagpur Division on the

other were held to justify the decision to include them in Bihar. But the question which they had to consider in course of their examination of this problem was whether the position of Oriya in the Seraikella Subdi vision was by itself, an adequate ground for disturbing the existing arrangements. The language by itself did not, in their opinion, provide sufficient justification for breaking up a district. In this case, moreover, the Oriya percentage in the rural areas was only about twenty-six and those speaking that language did not seem to be concentrated in any particular area within the subdivision, to such an extent that linguistic affinities could be regarded as clear and unmistakable. This could be avoided only if the whole of Singhbhum was transferred to Orissa. Such a transfer, however, would not be justified on administrative and other grounds. In this background, the Commission recommended that Seraikella and Kharsawan should continue to be a part of Bihar<sup>34</sup>. This conclusive report of the States Reorganisation Commission thus put at rest all controversies about the merger of the Princely States of Seraikella and Kharsawan with the province of Bihar.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

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# **SOME ASPECTS OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE SERAIKELLA AND KHARSAWAN STATES**

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### **General Administration**

The States of Seraikella and Kharsawan had a well developed administrative system. Besides general administration, both the States had their own land revenue and excise systems. The States had their separate judicial, police and jail administration. But due to lack of information, it is very difficult to form an idea of the early administration of both these states. As both the states were the off-shoots of the Porahat state, we can infer that the administration of these states might have followed the pattern of administration in the Porahat Raj. Further, some administrative changes took place in both these States when they came into contact with the British Power.

### **The King, his powers and functions**

The Ruler of Seraikella State had assumed the title of 'Kunwar' while that of Kharsawan State bore the title of 'Thakur'. As these Rulers were the off-shoots of the Porahat Raj, they generally accepted and adopted the customs of the mother State. In Porahat Raj, the second son of the Raja was called Kunwar<sup>1</sup>, while the other princes of the state who were given some jagirs in lieu of certain services to the king came to be known as Thakin's. They were zamindars of Kera and Anandpm<sup>2</sup>. As the founder Ruler of Seraikella was the second son of the Porahat Raja, he assumed the title of 'Kunwar' and thus the successive rulers came to be called "Kunwars" in the beginning. On the other hand, the ruler of Kharsawan was a mere zamindar in the beginning. Hence he bore the title of "Thakur" and his successors were known as "Thakurs" later, on. When the Rulers of Seraikella became independent of the Porahat Raj, they began to use

the title Raja. As for example, Ab hiram Singh and Bikram Singh bore the title of Raja<sup>3</sup>. In 1856 the English company conferred the title of 'Raja' on Chakradhar Singh of Seraikella for the first time<sup>4</sup>. Since then the Rulers of Seraikella came to be known as Rajas. However, Thakur Sri Ramchandra Singh, Chief of Kharsawan was for the first time conferred the hereditary title of Raja by the British in June 1917, and from then the Rulers of Kharsawan, were also known as Rajas<sup>5</sup>.

Before ascending the throne there used to be a coronation ceremony. This coronation ceremony or 'Rajya Abhishek' of the King was an unique and gala ceremony. During this ceremony the chiefs observed the same customs as the kings of Porahat and other chiefs of these areas. In this ceremony the new king was formally offered the crown by Bhuiyan Sardar within his territories. Thus Bhuiyan Chiefs offered tilak to the new Raja on his investiture and thus a prince became the new raja. Without this, no chief could become the Raja of the State<sup>6</sup>. This system survived during the entire British period.

Regarding the right of succession to the throne, the law of primogeniture also prevailed in these states. After the death of a ruler, the eldest son of the deceased ruler was entitled to become the king of the state, other princes were given some tracts of land for their maintenance<sup>7</sup>. If the eldest son died during the life time of the ruler, the eldest son of the deceased prince would become the ruler<sup>8</sup>.

The Kings of the two States were supreme in their respective territories. It appears that before contact with the British, the chief of both these states were independent and sovereign rulers<sup>9</sup>. As the chiefs of the States they were not only the head of the judiciary but also of religion and the regular forces. The king was so powerful that his order was the law which the people of the area had to obey<sup>10</sup>. During the earlier period the chiefs of these States were so powerful that they considered themselves to have the power of life and death over their subjects<sup>11</sup>. The king performed all the important religious functions and took leading part in festivals. It was customary that the priest of the Pauri Devi temple could enter the temple for worship only when accompanied by the King. None could enter and see the deity except the Chief of the State. This Pauri Devi, located in the Palace of Seraikella, was the Chief deity of Seraikella and Kharsawan People<sup>12</sup>. Similarly during the Ind Puja also the ruler was himself used to remain present and performed the puja to God Indra<sup>13</sup>.

As the head of the army, during wars in the early period, the Chiefs of these States personally took part in the war and led the soldiers<sup>14</sup>.

During the early British period also these Rulers had given military assistance to the British for suppressing the people's movements in these areas and, had personally led the soldiers during the wars<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the rulers had assumed supreme power in all the fields of administration, including the conduct of warfare.

But after contact with the British the administration of both the States I underwent a radical transformation. In the year 1837, when Kolhan was formed, a special officer was appointed in the Kolhan known as Principal Assistant with Headquarters at Chaibasa. Since then, direct interference in the internal affairs of these States began<sup>16</sup>. Though the Principal Assistant was in charge of the Kolhan, the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan were treated as subordinate to him. Their judicial powers were progressively curtailed by the British. Though both the Chiefs heard and decided all cases, InK J, arising in their own territories, an appeal could be made to the Principal Assistant. Their authority in criminal cases was strictly limited. In the year 1854 Chotanagpur was transferred to the control of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal under a Commissioner and the Officer-in-Charge of Singhbhum was designated Deputy commissioner, in stead of Principal Assistant. The Deputy commissioner, Singhbhum, also began to exercise control over these States, subject to the supervision of the Commissioner of Chotanagpur. Since then, not only in home affairs but also in external matters the British intervened in both these states<sup>17</sup>.

In the year 1899, a sanad was granted to Raja Udit Narayan Singh Deo of Seraikella and Thakur Mahendra Narayan Singh Deo of Kharsawan, which clearly defined the status, powers and position of both the Rulers. The sanad laid down the conditions on which the Rulers of both the States were to carry on their administration. In all matters concerning the preservation of law and order and the administration of Justice, they were now bound to follow the instructions given by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The rulers were now required to hand over any offenders from British or other territories who might take refuge in their states and to help British Officers who might pursue criminals into their territories. The rulers were also not to levy tolls or duties of any kind on grain, merchandise or other articles passing either into or through the states without the permission of the Lieutenant Governor. The Rulers had to consult the Commissioner of Chotanagpur and comply with his wishes in all important matters of administration<sup>18</sup>. Hence forth, the sanad of 1899 became the basis of administration on both the states and the Rulers had to strictly follow the letters of the

sanad. Thus the curtailment of the powers of the ruling chiefs began as soon as the British seized suzerain power.

### **The Administrative Machinery**

Though sources available are meagre in providing us with detailed information about central administration of the states. In the earlier periods, we come across the names of such officials as the Diwan, the Senapati, the feudal lords and soldiers etc. who helped the rulers to run the internal administration.

#### **(a) The Diwan: (The Revenue Officer)**

The Diwan generally occupied the apex position. That the States had the post of a Diwan can be ascertained from the fact that during the rule of Abhiram Singh, Narhari Mahapatra was the Diwan of Seraikella<sup>19</sup>. He functioned as the chief revenue officer of the State<sup>20</sup>. Sometimes he had also to render military service and he led the royal army during wars<sup>21</sup>. During the modern period, the Diwan also acted as a judicial officer<sup>22</sup>.

#### **(b) The Senapati : (The Commander-in-Chief) :**

Senapati was the chief of the military establishment. In the early periods, he led the soldiers in wars. There are references to show that during the time of Abhiram Singh, Gangadhar Aditya, Krishna Gantayat and Sadasive Gantayat were the Senapatis of the Seraikella State<sup>23</sup>. Sometimes the princes also acted as Senapatis of the army and took part in the battles. During the time of Abhiram Singh, his son Bikram Singh undertook an expedition against Bajnath Singh of Dampara in 1810. Similarly, during the time of Bikram Singh of Seraikella, his son Ajambar Singh undertook a military expedition against the rebellious Hos<sup>24</sup>.

#### **(c) Pirpattidars (Tenure-holders) :**

Pirpattidars were the lords of the Pirs<sup>25</sup>. They were generally princes and relatives of the royal houses. They were known as Babus (aristocrats). As they were the lords of the pirs, they held an important position in the central administration. They had to render certain services which were generally of a military nature. They also took part in the wars of the State and their troops were often detailed for duty. They had to supply levies for the royal army. Sometimes they took charge of the royal army and the garh (fort) during the king's absence. But later on, these services were discontinued. They also accompanied the Chief when he was on tours of this area. They had also to make necessary arrangements during weddings in the royal family and also during court ceremonies<sup>26</sup>.

**(d) Chakran tenure holders<sup>27</sup> and other petty officers of the establishment.**

The main duty of these persons was to convey messages for the chief or carry out the instructions of the Chief regarding supply of provisions to the royal house. They were also liable to performing the domestic duties of the ruler and the members of his family and for supply of betels, flowers etc. on certain occasions. They had to perform various kinds of odd services and also render military service when required<sup>28</sup>. These may be called the petty officers of the State and were generally connected with the affairs of the royal houses.

Besides these, there were some more petty officials such as Gahandals who were the special body-guards who had to look after the personal security of the Chief during peace and war. Subsequently these posts lost their importance as the holders of the post fell out of use, their places having been taken over by piadas and Chaprasis<sup>29</sup>. The paikes constituted the security force. Their function was that of watch and ward. They had to escort the treasury officers and they also carried messages<sup>30</sup>. There were some persons known Pan pikes. The duty of these persons, as the name implies, was to hold the spittoon for the chief while he chewed betel<sup>31</sup>. The above named employees were granted some pieces of land free of rent in return for the services rendered<sup>32</sup>.

**(e) Some later Institutions:**

Besides these, there was an Executive Council in both the States which dealt with all important matters. In the Seraikella state this executive council was known as the State council. It consisted of the rulers, the high officials of the State and other important persons. The ruler was the President of the council. The exact number of the members of the Council is not known, but it seems that the number varied according to the will of the rulers as well as the necessity of the various departments of the States. The various departments of the States were assigned to the different members of the State council who carried out the administration of the department subject to the direction and stewardship of the rulers. Important matters regarding policy etc. were put before the State Council where decisions on them were taken. The council met several times in a year for discussing the important matters of the State<sup>33</sup>.

In Kharsawan this function was performed by the "Darbar" of the state. It was responsible for all the important decisions of the state and thus the Darbar of the ruler was the supreme Executive Council of the state<sup>34</sup>. It appears that due to the political upheaval in the country, the

rulers of these States gave some facilities to the people and associated them with the administration. This was the reason why the rulers allowed the people a few facilities, such as, expression of views on matters relating to public well-being. The object was to secure better co-operation between the administration and the people. A committee of the people functioned from the year 1940.

This committee decided important matters relating to administration<sup>35</sup>. This was the first time when the people and the general masses were associated with the administration. In Seraikella, this committee was known as Praja Parishad<sup>36</sup>, while in Kharsawan it came to be known as Praja Sabha<sup>37</sup>. In Seraikella, there were 24 members of the Praja Parishad and the prince designate was the -resident. Others were nominated from among the high officials and other important persons of the state. This Praja Parishad generally dealt with matters relating to the welfare of the people, such as, tree-plantation, improvement of the working of the schools, control of epidemics<sup>38</sup>, reorganisation of the managing committee of rural schools, measures against pollution of drinking water and digging of drains and sewers in the villages<sup>39</sup>. In Kharsawan there were eleven members of the Praja Sabha. Of these, five were elected from the different constituencies of the State and one of the members was an aboriginal. Five members of the Sabha were nominated by the rulers. The Diwan of the State acted as the Chairman of the Praja Sabha. The Sabha was empowered to discuss matters concerning agriculture, water, primary education, sanitation, medical relief and communication<sup>40</sup>. Similarly it discussed matters relating to the improvement of secondary education, irrigation and veterinary relief etc<sup>41</sup>. This committee sent its suggestions and resolutions to the Darbar<sup>42</sup>. Sometimes at the instance of this sabha, the Darbar of Kharsawan took measures for the amelioration of the lot of the people and putting a check on profiteering by the traders. It fixed the price of the essential commodities and controlled the price of the goods<sup>43</sup>. In this way, these committees of the States tried to usher in Rudiments of democracy.

### Administration of the Pirs

The States of Seraikella and Kharsawan were divided into several divisions known as pirs. The number of these pirs in Seraikella did not vary. The earliest account of these pirs as noted in the survey of 1868 shows that they numbered eight. These pirs were -(1) Dugni, (2) Banksai, (3) Icha, (4) Kandra, (5) Gamharia, (6) Sadant, (7) Kuchung and (8) Karaikela<sup>44</sup>. On the other hand, there was a slight variation in the



number in Khursawan. Before 1904 the pirs numbered three, i.e. Sadant, Asantali and Kolhan. But after 1904, Sadant, and Asantali were merged into one. So the number came down to two<sup>45</sup>. Again in 1925-27, the number rose to three, i.e. Sadant, Bunkhandi and Kolhan<sup>46</sup>.

The heads of these pirs were pirpatidars or khorposhdars locally called Babus or Zamindar. They were generally relatives of the Rulers. Their duty was to maintain law and order in the pirs. During wars they assisted the Rulers with their own soldiers<sup>47</sup>. Like the kings, they had their own Gahandals and Paikes, who had to perform certain duties, similar to those of their kind at the centre<sup>48</sup>. The pirpatidars also acted as revenue officers in as much as they were responsible for the collection of revenue in their "jurisdiction"<sup>49</sup>.

### Village Administration

The smallest administrative unit was the village. The pirs were divided into several villages. The head of the village was known as Munda, Pradhan or Thikadar depending on the nature of the population of the village. The headman belonged to the village itself. The villages with Ho or Munda population had the Munda as the village headman. Similarly, the Gowala or Kumhar dominated villages had Pradhan as the village headman<sup>50</sup>. In case of villages under tenure-holders, the head of the village was known as the Thikadar. He was appointed by the Rulers on the basis of nomination by tenure-holders<sup>51</sup>. The main duty of the village headman was to collect rent from the residents and pay it to the zamindars<sup>52</sup>. He was responsible for the collection of the total rent of the village. No excuse was accepted from the headman on account of land which had been abandoned or otherwise disclaimed or declared fallow, and if he failed to pay the rent of two kists (instalments) in the same year, the headman was liable to ejection. The headman was remunerated either by a grant of rent free lands or by a commission termed as 'nala' of ten pies in the rupee of the total rent of the village. He was also entrusted with certain police powers. He had to report to the nearest police station about all cognizable and non-bailable offences, the presence of known offenders and bad characters, suspicious deaths, and periodically all births and deaths in his locality. In addition to these, he had to supply rasad on payment to troops, government servants, the ruling chief or his officers who might happen to travel within the State. He had to keep the village roads in good condition with the help of the raiyats. The village headman could not be ejected except by order of a competent court. His post was hereditary and he could not

transfer his rights or otherwise alienate them without the Chief's consent. If he failed in his duties and if it was found necessary to remove him from the headmanship, his son would succeed him, if he was found intellectually and physically fit. If he had no heirs or they were unfit, another member of the family was chosen. If this could not be done, the next choice was an influential raiyat of the same villages<sup>53</sup>.

The village headman had some other officials to assist him, e.g. the village constable or watchman known as Dakua. He was appointed by the village headman. Just like the police constable, his work was to perform watch and ward duties of the locality. There were, however, Choukidars, working in the village on appointment by the ruler himself and they were distinguished from the Dakua who was appointed by the Munda of the village or the headman. This Choukidar was responsible for reporting all suspicious deaths and all births and deaths within seven days of the occurrence to the nearest police station<sup>54</sup>.

From the above review of the general administration we find that the entire structure of the administration was pyramidal with the king at the apex and the village headman assisted by petty officials at the bottom. This pyramidal structure was time-honoured and was prevalent both in Seraikella and Kharsawan States.

### **The State Army**

The two States maintained a standing army and a military organisation in the early years of the States. This was necessary not only for the expansion but also for the safety of the kingdoms. It appears that during the early period the Rulers expanded their territories through conquests, there are indications that the Seraikella Raja attacked the neighbouring territories of Patkum, Barabhum and Tamar and extended his authority over them<sup>55</sup>. At the same time, the States were harassed by the Larka Hos from one side and by the Bhuiyans on the other<sup>56</sup>. During the early British period also the military forces of these States came to the assistance of the company Government in suppressing the tribal rising in the area<sup>57</sup>.

The military forces of these states were organised on dual lines. One was the royal army and the other was the army of the feudal lords or the pirpattidars. It appears that the standing army was under the command of a Senapati. Sometimes the princes commanded this army during the wars<sup>58</sup>. The other armies were under the feudal lords. During wars, these feudal lords were asked to supply troops. They supplied troops and at the same time they commanded these forces personally<sup>59</sup>.

It appears that there were three branches of the military department- infantry, cavalry and firearmsmen. The infantry was a rugged branch of the army. They were generally paid soldiers and were under a sardar or the feudallord<sup>60</sup>. The actual strength of the infantry is not known, but they were more than a few thousands because it appears that during the time of Raja Abdurham Singh of Seraikella, the ruler helped the British with one thousand men. This shows that there were more than a thousand men in the army because the chief assisted the British within his limits<sup>61</sup>. The cavalry was another unit of the army. These horsemen were known as suwars also<sup>62</sup>. The third unit of the army consisted of the matchlockmen. These fire-armsmen were equipped with guns<sup>63</sup>. During this period, these fire-armsmen were known as the Barkandazes<sup>64</sup>. The weapons which the soldiers used were generally bows and arrows, axes, swords and guns<sup>65</sup>. Regarding the salaries of the soldiers, there is no positive information about the exact amount paid to them, but there is evidence that besides salary they were granted lands free of rent for their own maintenance<sup>66</sup>. The State armies were thus not a ramshackle lot, but a well equipped and trained group. With the help of this army the Seraikella kings were able to extend their control and also save their State from enemy attacks. Later the company Government was ably and invariably helped by the Seraikella troops whenever help was sought from the Raja.

## **II. Land Revenue Administration**

The earliest authoritative account of land revenue administration of both the Seraikella and Kharsawan States, prior to the coming of the British, is not available. But it seems that there was a well developed system of land revenue administration in these states in as much as they were fairly prosperous. The systematic records on land revenue administration are found after the settlement operations which started at the beginning of the century. But some references are found about the land revenue of these areas during the early British period. In the year 1821, Major Moushoge defeated the Hos of Singhbhum and compelled them to enter into an agreement to pay tribute to the Chiefs. One of the conditions of the agreement was that the tribesmen were to pay to their Chiefs eight annas per working plough for a period of five years and subsequently it was to be increased to one rupee if the circumstances permitted. This was the first evidence of the people paying tribute to their respective Chiefs of Porahat, Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>67</sup>. Similarly Lt. Tickell, Assistant to the Governor General at Chaibasa, also found in the year 1842 that the villages of the Chiefs of Singhbhum paid land

rent to the several zamindars of the area. He further informs that the rent was paid not according to quantum of produce but according to the size of the villages. The village headmen collected these rents<sup>68</sup>. Another reference is found in the report on the geographical, statistical and topographical survey of Chotanagpur. In this survey of 1867, it is mentioned that the raiyats of Seraikella were paying one rupee for each 'bigha' of land to their Chief. Similarly the raiyats of Kharsawan were paying rupees forty for fifty 'bighas' of land<sup>69</sup>. These are examples to show that there was regular collection of land revenue in these States and a network of revenue system was in operation.

The first joint settlement of the Seraikella and Kharsawan States was made on 12 September, 1904 by C. W.E. Connolly, a Deputy collector posted at Chaibasa. Both the Rulers of Seraikella and Kharsawan appealed to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur for a settlement. The Government asked C. W.E. Connolly to make this settlement. Ultimately Mr. Connolly was appointed under Government Notification No.2213 P, dated 15th October, 1904 as Settlement Officer of the two States and he completed his work in the year 1907. This settlement was made for twenty years. During this settlement the rents were fixed in 723 villages containing 25,062 tenancies and 230,117 plots of Seraikella State. In Kharsawan, the rents were settled in 194 villages containing 9,296 tenancies and 110,716 plots. Before this settlement, the same rate of rent had been charged for all classes of land irrespective of their production. For the first time in this settlement the rents were assessed according to the quality of land<sup>70</sup>. The lands were divided into two main classes, viz. Dhani or rice land and Gora or uplands. The Dhani land was in which rice was grown while the Gora lands were the uplands, which produced coarse rice and various kinds of mil crops. Further, Dhani lands had been subdivided into four classes:

1. Ber lands which produced the winter rice crops usually harvested in Aghan (Oct.-Nov.) and Paus (Nov.-Dec.). These lands were perennially moist and generally received a supply of water from subterranean springs.
2. Nali lands consisting of long narrow strips prepared in the beds of Nalas or streamlets. Crops were harvested in Aghan (Oct.-Nov.).
3. Don II land which produced the winter crops which were usually harvested in Aghan (upto the 15th of November). It was inferior to Bern and Nali lands.

- 4 Don III lands which produced rice which was usually harvested Aswin (July-August) and sometimes in Bhado (Sept.-Oct) These lands were situated at a high level and were reckoned only next to Gora or uplands. The first two classes included the lowest fields, the third category included middle terraces and the fourth included the highest fields which approximated to the Gora class<sup>71</sup>.

In the first settlement rents had been fixed according to the quantity of lands in the different pirs of both the States<sup>72</sup>. In this rent settlement we find that the rent for the Bera land was highest while that for Gora land the lowest. Similarly, the rent for the Singhbhum Pir of Seraikella and the Sadant pir of Kharsawan was higher than for the other pirs of the states.

When the term of the first settlement expired, the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan desired a fresh settlement for their areas. Hence Khan Sahib Seikh Abdul Hakim, a Deputy Collector, was appointed as the Settlement Officer for the Seraikella State. He joined the post on 24 October, 1925<sup>73</sup>. In the Kharsawan State, Babu Indra Bilas Mukherji was appointed as the Settlement Officer. He joined his post on 1st. October, 1925<sup>74</sup>. In Seraikella State during this second settlement, the rent was fixed in 729 villages containing 34,578 holdings and 3, 21, 730 plots<sup>75</sup>. In Kharsawan, the rent was fixed in 195 villages containing 13, 654 holdings and 1,12,484 plots<sup>76</sup>.

In this settlement the division of rice lands was the same, but the Gora lands were divided into seven more classes :

1. Gora-I lands were unembanked uplands on which coarse rice and rabi crops were grown annually.
2. Gora-II lands were ordinary 'unembanked uplands on which Bhadaï crops of inferior value were grown.
3. The Khargora land was generally found at the foot of small hills and the produce was a valuable thatching grass which was in much demand by the villagers.
4. Kalimati lands were a superior class of uplands with considerably more thickness of soil than the average Gora lands with thin layers of soil.
5. Kudar lands were small class of uplands, generally found on the rivers. The soil was alluvial and valuable
6. Ghar Angna or Bastu -Homestead lands.

7. Bari lands or Udbastu lands, close to the village site which were generally well manured and fenced and on which valuable rabi crops were grown<sup>77</sup>.

In this settlement of 1925-27 of Kharsawan State, the revenue of the four villages of Porahat Estate which were earlier granted to the Chief of Kharsawan after the mutiny, were settled for the first time with Khawan Si State. These four villages were Serahaka, Simidiri, Dalki and Semraidihi. For statistical purposes, Bankhandi pir of Kharsawan was considered a part of the Sadant pir. The rate of the Bankhandi pir was the same as that of the pir of Sadant<sup>78</sup>. This was the reason why the rents of Bankhandi Pir were not shown in this settlement report.

Another change of this new settlement of Seraikella and Kharsawan was the resettlement of the tanks (Bandhs). As the people had started making some profits out of their Bandhs by rearing fish or irrigating their lands, the State for the first time, assessed rents on the tanks of the area. This was the reason why in the table of rents the tanks were also shown in this settlement. In this settlement the rate of rent in Sadant Pir of Seraikella was higher than that in the other Pirs of the State. On the other hand the rate of Bera land was high while the rate of the Gora-II land was the lowest. Similarly in Kharsawan the rate of the sadant Pir was the highest and the rent on the villages of the Porahat Pir was the lowest. In Kharsawan also the rate of Bera land was high and that of Gora II land was the lowest<sup>79</sup>.

The rent was realised through the headman of the village under both, the settlements. For this he was remunerated either by the grant of certain land rent-free and known as 'Manland' or by a commission called 'Nala' of 10 pies in the rupee of the total of rent of the village<sup>80</sup>. In earlier days, there was a custom to pay the rent in term of paddy. But this system of paying rent in kind had become cumbersome to the tenants and ruinous in time of scarcity when the market rates for paddy or rice were very high and the produce of the land was low. Thus the system of paying rent in kind was replaced by money rent<sup>81</sup>. The customary as well as statutory dates for payment of land revenue to the headmen were the last day of Kartik. (October-November) and last day of Magh (January-February) in two kists<sup>82</sup>. It was the duty of the headmen to grant a written receipt to the tenants for all rents realised<sup>83</sup>.

### **Instruments and the Units of land measurement**

The land measuring instruments of these States were the same as those in Porahat State. The local land measuring instruments were of



two kinds "the Paran" (with unit) and "the Dang" (the log). The original unit, of land measurement in these areas was the 'paran', containing as much of land as was usually sown with a mound of seeds. Five Parans made up a 'hal' or plough. The size of the 'Paran' land was equivalent to 2,500 square yards and became the local 'bigha'<sup>84</sup>. The system of this land measurement was as follows:

1 paran	=	2,500 square yards,
5 paran	=	1 hal
1 hal	=	12,500 square yards

Another system of land measurement prevalent in this area was the dang or the pole system. This 'dang' was equivalent to 10 hath (arm length) or cubits i.e. 15 feet. This "dang" standard was as follows :

10	hath or cubits	-	one dang or pole
100	square dang	-	one bigha
one	bigha	-	2500 square or yards or
		-	22,500 square feet.

The Bighas were subdivided into Kathas and dhurs

20 Dhurs	=	1 Katha
20 Kathas	=	1 Bigha

Thus in this measurements one hundred 'dangs' made a bigha, which was, therefore, 2,500 square yards. One bigha was equal to 51 of an acre and one acre was equal to 1 bigha, 18 Kathas and 14 1/2 dhurs of the local measurements<sup>85</sup>.

### **Land tenure**

All land of the States was divided into two broad and basic categories of Khalisa lands and assigned lands. The Khalisa lands were the personal lands of the Ruler himself, while the assigned lands were given by the Ruler to different officers and others. The difference between the two was that the revenue administration of the former was directly under the Rulers of the State while the revenue collection of the latter was assigned by the Rulers to different categories of his officers and subjects. The assigned lands were known as tenure lands in this area. The following important tenures have been found in both the States of Seraikella and Kharsawan.

1. Khorposh
2. Naukran or Chakran

3. Barahmottar or religious grants
4. Mafi

### 1. Khorposh grants (maintenance lands)

Khorposh grants were those given by the ruling chief generally to his relatives for their maintenance. These lands were always rent free and the holders of this 'Khorposh' paid only a contribution towards the up-keep of the police and the army. The landlords or zamindars of Ichha, Dugni and Banksai were the Khorposhdars of Seraikella State, while the zamindars of Raidih and Harbhanga were given Khorposh grants by the Kharsawan State. As stated earlier, these landlords had to perform some duties towards the State granting the Khorposh lands<sup>86</sup>.

### 2. Chakran or Naukran (land tenure for workmen)

These lands were granted to certain persons in lieu of their services to the States. These grants were fairly numerous and the duties in lieu of them were mainly the same as those of the Khorposhdars. The grants were lands or villages. They were resumable in default of due performance of the services<sup>87</sup>.

### 3. Religious grants

These grants known as "Brahmottar" and "Debottar" etc. were numerous in the States. The Brahmottar tenures were religious grants made to the Brahmins by the ruling Chiefs. Debottar grants were dedicated to idols by name. A Brahmin was appointed as a trustee to manage the property on behalf of the idol. The Brahmottar lands were non-resumable<sup>88</sup>.

### 4. Mafi (free tenures)

These grants were given free of all conditions to persons for some services rendered and which had pleased the ruling Chiefs or the Khorposhdars. These were very few in numbers<sup>89</sup>.

### 5. Khuntkatti Tenures (Original Settlers)

Khuntkatti tenure, unknown in Seraikella State, were found in Kharsawan State. But they were found only in Kolhan pir of Kharsawan where the majority of the inhabitants were aboriginals. These people claimed that they were Mundari Khunt-Kattidars and were not liable to any enhancement of rent. The term 'Khuntkatti' means that any person who came and cleared the jungle with his own hands and converted it into arable land could become a Khuntkattidar. At the same time, there could be no doubt that the people in Kolhan pir of Kharsawan had

certain privileges not extended to the raiyats of the sadant pir. All those who were descendants of the original clearers of the soil were accordingly entered as having Khunkattidar rights in the lands. The Khunkattidars possessed following privileges:

1. Right to convert uplands into low lands and to reclaim new lands without anyone's consent.
2. Right to all fuel, wood for houses or agricultural implements and jungle produce free for their own use but not for purchase and sale.
3. Right to grow lac and tassar in their own villages<sup>90</sup>.

The raiyats of the State possessed a raiyati right known as Prajali in all lands entered in their name in the settlement records of the State. They could not be ousted in any way except by order of a Court of competent jurisdiction in the States. The raiyats of these States were entitled hold their fruit -groves, thrashing -floors and manure -pits-rent free.

The raiyats had the right to break new lands in any part of the State except protected forest, public grazing ground, village roads, grave-yards and ground specially reserved for the ruling Chiefs. These new lands were held rent free for the first five years and after that period and upto the next-settlement held at half rates. The transfer of occupancy rights by sale or gifts, or by a mortgage or lease for more than five years was strickly forbidden. If it was for more than five years the raiyat had to seek the special permission of the Chiefs. If a raiyat who had acquired lands by purchase from another was not recognised either by the headman or by Chief, he was liable to be ousted. In all such casses if one transferred his land to the other persons, the latter had to be a raiyat of the state and the deed of transfer had to be registered at the State capital. Mortgages were not common and in most cases the form known as Bhagat-bandha, i.e. the mortgage lapsed after a certain number of years, and in the meanume the crops were made over in liquidation of both interest and principal. Mortgage could not be made for more than five years and this must be sanctioned by the chief<sup>91</sup>.

In many instances holders of brahmottar and other tenures leased out their lands to the raiyats for a specified number of years at a fixed rental which was generally higher than the prevailling rate. On the conclusion of the specified term, the raiyat had no lien over the land and the owner was at liberty to settle it either with him or with another raiyat. A lease of this kind was usually granted by a registered document and was known by the generic term 'Thika'<sup>92</sup>. A raiyat

would not be ejected from his homestead lands for failing to pay rent<sup>93</sup>. In case if one tenant would not pay his rent, the headmen informed the name of the defaulter to the Chief. At the first instance the ruler issue notice to the defaulter for payment of his dues direct to the treasury of the State within certain specific date and on failure it was realised through the Revenue Court of the States.

### **III. Judicial Administration**

In the beginning, the ruler of both the States independently discharged the function of the judiciary. They were supreme judges in their territories. But after the coming of the British, the Britishers not only interfered in executive matters but also judicial matters. So from time to time some changes took place in the judiciary of both the states.

#### **Criminal Justice**

During the pre-British days, the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan decided all the criminal cases within their territories. They had even the power of life and death over their subjects. Being the supreme Judges, the Chiefs acted as the highest court of appeal dealing with all such cases which could not be finally settled at the Panchayat level,<sup>94</sup> and probably also in the zamindars courts. Moreover, in both civil and criminal matters the royal court also enjoyed primary jurisdiction. But after annexation of the Kolhan in the year 1837 by the British, the criminal jurisdiction of the Chiefs was curtailed by the British<sup>95</sup>. They were now required to send all persons guilty of murder to the Political Assistant at Chaibasa for commitment trial<sup>97</sup>. Further in 1842, various orders were passed by the British Officers directing the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan to refer all serious cases to the Political Assistant and trifling cases were to be dealt with by the Chiefs themselves. In practice, murder, dacoity, burglary, cattle-lifting and procuring abortion were regarded as serious cases, but there was no systematic classification of crimes. However, at this time the Chiefs were allowed by the British to impose fine or order imprisonment for short periods in jails of their own<sup>98</sup>. But in 1848 the British Government directed that all persons confined by the Chiefs in State jails be sent for imprisonment to Chaibasa. Since these orders curtailed the powers of the Chiefs, they created dissatisfaction among the rulers and gradually they gave up exercising their judicial powers. Consequently, even the most trifling cases were referred to the Political Assistant at Chaibasa. Thus by the year 1853, there was not a single person in confinement under their orders<sup>99</sup>.

In 1854 Chotanagpur became a separate Commissionery under a Commissioner. The Political Assistant at Chaibasa was designated as Deputy Commissioner. Since then judicial administration was further streamlined and administration of justice in the States was hinged on the British judicial system. Now the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum exercised control subject to the supervision of the Commissioner of Chotanagpur over the State of Seraikella and Kharsawan. He became the Assistant Sessions Judge for these two States also and heard appeals from the order the chiefs and the commissioner of Chotanagpur exercised the Sessions Judge<sup>100</sup>.

It appears that to dispose off criminal cases, there were three criminal courts in Seraikella State. Of these one was presided over by the Raja himself and the other two by his two sons. All of them exercised the powers of a Magistrate of the second class. In Kharsawan there was only one criminal court of the Ruler who exercised the powers of a second class Magistrate<sup>101</sup>. Thus it appears that the rulers exercised the judicial powers subject to the control of the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum and the commissioner of Chotanagpur. They were now empowered to pass sentences of imprisonment upto five years and to impose a fine to the extent of Rs. 200/-, but sentences of imprisonment for more than two years required confirmation by the Commissioner. Heinous offences calling for heavier punishment were dealt with by the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum<sup>102</sup>.

**Civil Justice** After the coming of the British in this area, the civil powers of the Chiefs were also curtailed. In 1837, when the Kolhan was brought under the direct management of a British Officer stationed at Chaibasa, the Chiefs of these States were treated as subordinate to him. Though these two Rulers heard and decided all civil cases arising in their territories, an appeal lay with the Political Assistant at Chaibasa<sup>103</sup>. Similarly after the creation of the Chotanagpur Division, the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum supervised the Seraikella and Kharsawan States in the matter of civil cases also. There were three courts in Seraikella state for the trial of civil suits including revenue and executive cases, presided over by the Ruler and his princes. On the other hand, in Kharsawan, there was only one court for the trial of Civil suits and it performed the function of a registering office also. For all judicial matters, whether criminal or civil, the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum was Assistant Judge for these States and heard appeals while the commissioner of Chotanagpur exercised the power of Sessions Judge<sup>104</sup>.

### **Village Panchayat**

The ancient village Panchayat system was prevalent in these States. The village panchayat decided some minor criminal cases and boundary disputes in the villages. When a village headman received a complaint he sent his Dakua (village constable) to the spot asking him to produce the accused. During hearing each house-hold was required to send at least one male member, whether old or young to take part in the proceedings. Even a child might represent his house hold in the absence of an old member. The decision of the Panchayat had to be unanimous and parties were allowed to plead their cases in person or through a representative. The headman merely delivered judgment. However, an appeal against his decision might be made to the Raja<sup>105</sup>.

After independence when both these states merged into the State of Bihar in 1948. The jurisdiction of the Manbhum-Singhbhum Judgeship was extended to the areas within Seraikella and Kharsawan. The jurisdiction of the Court of Subordinate Judge, Manbhum-Singhbhum, was also extended over Seraikella and Kharsawan. Similarly the Jurisdiction of the Munsif of Jamshedpur was also extended over these areas. Now the Munsiff of Jamshedpur was required to sit at Seraikella (which was headquarters of Seraikella and Kharsawan sub-division) from time to time for disposal of business arising within Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>106</sup>. From 7 November, 1949, the Court of the subordinate Judge of Singhbhum had its jurisdiction over Seraikella and Kharsawan, with headquarters at Chaibasa. The cases arising within Seraikella-Kharsawan subdivision were tried at Serarikella by the same Subordinate Judge. A sub-Deputy Collector at Chaibasa and another at Seraikella were vested with powers of a Munsif. They remained in charge of the file of the Munsif at those places and made the cases ready for hearing by the regular Munsif of Jamshedpur<sup>107</sup>.

### **IV. The Police And Jail**

When the states of Seraikella and Kharsawan emerged as independent State they had their own police force which was necessary for the maintenance of law and order in their territories. Thus when the British came to Singhbhum they found that there was already a machinery for protecting the people. They found that a village police system already existed in the area. In the Kothan, police duties were discharged by the heads of the villages. For police purposes, the Flank or head of a group of 'V' of villages was the Chief police officer and the Mundas (headman) of villages were enrolled as his subordinates<sup>108</sup>. Though



there was almost the same type of police administration in the Kolhan, there was no regular and organised police force. Thus when the British first came to Singhbhum they found that there was a regular and organised police force in the States of Seraikella, Kharsawan and Porahal. Through this police force these Chiefs controlled their territories<sup>109</sup>.

With the growing British contact, the Rulers of these two states modernised the police organisation on the pattern of the British police system in other parts of the country. In this connection the police administration was carried out in accordance with the Bihar and Orissa Police Manual and Police Act (Act V of 1861) as adopted by the state. This act applied to the Kolhan and porahal also<sup>110</sup>. Hence the same type of police administration was enforced in Seraikella and Kharsawan also. Before independence, the Chief Police Officer of Seraikella was designated as superintendent of Police. Under him there were some Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and constables. In Kharsawan, the Chief Police Officer was designated as Inspector of Police. He had under him some Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, writers and constables etc. All the police officers in both the States were trained personnel either at Hazaribagh Police Training College in Bihar or Sagar Police Training College in Central Province (present Madhya Pradesh). Other police personnel received their training at Raigarh in Central province and Angul in Orissa. In Seraikella one Sub-Inspector was deputed for training in Finger-print at Patna Finger Print Bureau. He joined Seraikella State after completion of training in the month of the June, 1940. Some of the persons from Seraikella and Kharwan after completion of police training used also to work as Deputy Superintendent of Police in British Indian districts. Such was the case of Kumar Rudra Pratap Singh Doo of Seraikell who received training from Hazaribagh and worked as D.S.P. in 1929 and 1930 at Chaibasa and Jamshedpur. After that he joined as the Chief Police officer in the State of Seraikella with the designation of Superintendent of Police<sup>111</sup>.

In Seraikella State there were two Thanas situated at Seraikella Khas and Gobindpur. The former controlled the Sadant, Gamhria, Banksai, Dugni, Icha and Kandra pirs only while the Kuchung pir was under Govindpur thana. In Kharsawan State there was only one thana at Kharsawan and an outpost at Kuchai<sup>112</sup>. But after sometime one additional police outpost was opened at Bara Sargidihi in the south western area of the State of Kharsawan<sup>113</sup>. The number of police officials varied from time to time according to the necessity of the department. In the year 1907-1908 the police force of Seraikella State consisted of

one Inspector, two sub-inspectors, four head-constables, four writer-constables and Twenty-Five constables, in all thirty-six men. The Police force of Kharsawan State consisted of one Sub-Inspector, one head-constable, one drill-master and a havildar, in all seventeen men<sup>114</sup>. Later on, when crimes increased, the number of police force was also increased. In 1945-46, the total strength of Seraikella State police force came to one hundred twelve including thirty officers<sup>115</sup>. The Kharsawan police force also increased. In the year 1946-47, the Kharsawan State Police force consisted of fifty-two hands inclusive of officers<sup>116</sup>.

The police force of these States was armed with guns, swords and rods. In the year 1907-1908, the police force of these two States was armed with swords and single barrelled muzzled loading guns<sup>117</sup>. Later on, due to increase in crimes, the arms and ammunitions of the police also increased. In 1946-47 the Seraikella police had 37 BL. 410 bore muskets and nine 2 bore guns<sup>118</sup>. The Kharsawan police force had eighteen 410 muskets, 574 blank BL. SB cartridge etc<sup>119</sup>. The Police Inspectors were equipped with pistols. In 1930, the Chief of Seraikella asked for the permission of the British Government to purchase Browning pistols of. 32 bore for the use of police Inspectors in the State<sup>120</sup>. After proper verification and enquiries the British Government ordered the Chief of Seraikella to supply these pistols to the police force of this State<sup>121</sup>.

After Independence both these States acceded to the Indian Union and became a separate sub-division known as Seraikella. Now the area came under the charge of the Superintendent of Police at Chaibasa. The Singhbhum Police district was divided into four circles under circle Inspectors at Chaibasa, Jhinkpani Ghatsila and Seraikella. A post of Deputy Superintendent of Police had been created for the Seraikella subdivision. In October, however, when the police stations of Chandil, Palamda and were added to Singhbhum after reorganisation of the States, Chandil and Palamda were added to the jurisdiction of the Additional Supdt. of Police, Jamshedpur but Ichagarh was added to that of the Superintendent of Police, Chaibasa. It came under the jurisdiction of Seraikella subdivision. Thus there were now five police stations in Seraikella subdivision. Seraikella, Karsawan, Adityapur, Govindpur and Ichagarh<sup>122</sup>.

The major crimes-of these areas were murder, dacoities, robberies, burglaries, thefts, rapes and arson etc.<sup>123</sup>. Among the Hos, most of the murders were of persons connected with witch-craft. Generally it happened that one person having some enmity with the other accused the later to be practicing witch-craft and murdered the person supposed to be so practicing. In at that time the Hos, held that the killing of a which was

no murder<sup>124</sup>. Suicide was still, however, frequent crime of this area. Generally old people often put an end to their lives when they found they were becoming a burden to their relatives. Some-times family quarrels resulted in suicide but generally it was not so common. There was a criminal caste known as the Ghasis in this area. The Ghasis were a sweeper caste, said to have come from Orissa and Mayurlanji. These Ghasis had a bad reputation as cunning and daring thieves. They committed burglaries and sometimes killed cattle for the sake of their hides. The Ghasi women committed theft at Hais (weekly-market) and had been known to waylay and rob the Ho women coming in with their produce to the markets<sup>125</sup>. Sometimes they committed murder also.

Thus we find that both the States of Seraikella and Kharasawan had their own police force since the beginning. With the help of this force the Rulers of these two States maintained law and order in their territories<sup>126</sup>.

### **Jail Administration**

Both the States of Seraikella and Kharasawan had one Jail each for the criminals and convicted prisoners. These two jails were small in size, but were well ventilated and neat and clean. They were surrounded by a high stone wall. The number of prisoners varied from time to time. In the year 1908-1909, the Seraikella jail accommodated twenty-two male and ten female prisoners, while Kharasawan jail which was smaller could accommodate only eight male and three female prisoner<sup>127</sup>. Due to the increasing number of prisoners both the jails were enlarged and more accommodation facilities were provided. This was the reason why in the year 1945-46 the capacity of the prisoners in Seraikella jail rose to ninety-seven<sup>128</sup>. While in the same period the capacity of the prisoners in Kharasawan jail was thirty-eight only<sup>129</sup>. For female prisoners there was separate arrangement and they were kept in separate wards under a female warden<sup>130</sup>.

The jails of both the States had their own administrative staff to maintain law and order in the jails. The jail staff consisted of one medical officer, one jailor, one jail-clerk and some wardens, including female wardens. The prisoners' diet consisted of rice, dal (pulses), vegetables, salt and lemons etc. During ceremonial occasions and festivals special meals were supplied. During the winter, blanket were provided to the prisoners also. They were employed in gardening, weaving, paddy husking and other manual labour. During sickness and fever they were provided with medical treatment also<sup>131</sup>. In Seraikella jail there was special arrangement for imparting education

to the prisoners who were illiterate. Every Sunday they were taught alphabets in the classes. In these classes religious books were also read to them<sup>132</sup>. In the year 1940-41, two prisoners of the Seraikella jail were released by the order of the Ruler. One was released on grounds of old age and on the ground that he was considered incapable of committing any further crime. The other one was released on medical advice as he had tuberculosis and had no chance of recovery<sup>133</sup>. Similarly in year 1945-46, one prisoner was released before the expiry of his term on account of incurable blindness<sup>134</sup>. Generally the health and discipline of the prisoners had been satisfactory in both the jails of Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>135</sup>.

Besides the aids from the States, the income of both the jails was mainly derived from the hire of jail labour and sale of garden products, manufactured articles (such as carpentry works, weaving products, handicrafts) and milk, fish and other miscellaneous articles<sup>136</sup>.

## V. Excise

The excise was the most important source of revenue of both the States. The excise departments of both the States were headed by excise officers. Other than the officers, there were Excise inspectors, Jamadars and the peons also. With all this staff the excise officer supervised and collected revenue while the detection of excise crimes and prevention of smuggling was done by the Police with the co-operation of the excise staff<sup>137</sup>.

The people of the area mostly used to take country spirit, ganja, bhang, opium and bidi etc. For all these there were many shops in both the states. Both the states issued licence for opening excise shops. In Seraikella state there were thirty excise shops of which twenty one were country liquor shops, three Tadi (toddy shops) and six ganja shops<sup>138</sup>. In Kharsawan State, the number of excise shops was twelve of which six were of country spirit, two for opium, two for bhang and two for ganja. Besides these, twelve persons were given permission to sell country liquor which was known as Handia. The aboriginals of the area were allowed to manufacture Handia free of licence for their home consumption<sup>139</sup>. Generally opium was obtained duty-free from Gazipur factory while the supply of ganja and bhang was obtained free of duty from the government gola (store) at Chaibasa. These articles were issued from the State treasuries to the licenced vendors<sup>140</sup>. The states realised excise duty on bidi and matches and export duty on lac also. Besides these, both the States realised Hatmasul

Bazar's tax), licence free on ferry, ferry ghat tolls and other also<sup>141</sup>. Though systematic record of income from excise is not there, some idea about the income from excise can be found. In Seraikella State, in the year 1940-41, the income from all sources of excise was Rs. 1,59,396/- only<sup>142</sup>. Next year it rose to Rs. 1,75,669/-only<sup>143</sup>. Again in the year 1944-45, the total income of the excise department amounted to Rs. 2,94,714/- only. Next year it rose to Rs.3,99,656/-only<sup>144</sup>. On the other hand, the income from excise of the Kharsawan State in the year 1940-41 was Rs.39,045/-only<sup>145</sup>. In the year 1941-42, this amount rose to Rs. 39,463/- only<sup>146</sup>. Again in the year 1943-44 the income from excise was Rs. 57,415/- only<sup>147</sup>. This amount rose in the year 1946-47 to Rs. 1,09,723/- only<sup>148</sup>. The above description shows that the revenue from excise department registered an increase from the year 1940-41 to 1946-47. The number of shops also went up every year<sup>149</sup>. Thus it can be concluded that the people of these States became more and more addicted to drinks and drugs<sup>150</sup>.

## VI. Municipal Administration

Each of the two States had their own municipalities to look after the conservancy of Seraikella and Kharsawan townships. Seraikella Municipality was constituted in 1898 under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884. Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act of 1922 was enforced in the area after its merger in Bihar in 1948<sup>151</sup>. Before merger, it was managed by a committee of 16 members under a Chairman who was either Yuvraj of the State or an officer of the rank of a District Magistrate (an official of Seraikella Raj Administration) and a Vice Chairman, elected by the members of the Committee. The work of the municipality was to repair the roads, and keep the town neat and clean<sup>152</sup>. In the election of the Municipality in 1956, the total number of the members was 10, out of which 8 were elected and 2 nominated<sup>153</sup>. Seraikella Municipality received a grant of Rs. 1,100 and a loan of Rs. 2,400/- from the Government in the year 1956 for improvement of its roads<sup>154</sup>.

In Kharsawan also there was a Municipal Council to look after the Sanitations and lightings. This municipal council looked after Kharsawan township. It consisted of a Committee of five elected and five nominated members with a Chairman who was Generally Yuvraj of the State or any high official of the State and an elected non-official from amongst the members as Vice Chairman. The municipal area was divided into five wards and one non-official members was elected from each ward.

It maintained roads and drains, looked after sanitation, street-light, watering etc. Besides, by a system of barrage it maintained the water the Sona river during hot months<sup>155</sup>. In 1950 the municipal council was replaced by a Notified Area Committee, under Government Notification No. 2543-L S.G. dated 14 March, 1950. In 1951 and 1956 the committee, recieved Rs. 7,000 and Rs. 3,300, respectively as grants from the government for improvement of its roads<sup>156</sup>.

The principal sources of income of both the institutions (Seraikella and Kharsawan Municipalities) were tax on holdings, tax on vehicles, Cart-registration, rent of land and houses, ferry ghat, market fees, tax on groceries and shops and a grant from the State of the entire ground rent of the townships<sup>157</sup>. In this way both the towns Seraikella and Kharsawan were administered by Municipal Council.

## VII. Medical

Both the States of Seraikella and Kharsawan had their own hospitals. In the State of Seraikella there was only one hospital which was located at Seraikella town. This hospital was named "Victoria Hospital" after Queen Victoria. There were 12 beds-8 for males and 4 for females. Attached to the main hospital there was a Maternity Home styled as "King George- V Silver Jubilee Maternity Home." The Maternity Home was under the charge of a qualified Lady Doctor and was well equipped. Besides this there were two dispensaries in the mofussil area, one at Adityapur and the other at Karakella. Apart from these, there was one State Ayurvedic Dispensary located at this capital under a recognised Kaviraj Kheret was another private Ayurvedic Dispensary at Krusnapur which was very popular in the area and people from neighbouring areas of Chaibasa and Jamshedpur took admission for treatment there. The medical department was under the control of a Chief Medical Officer, an employee of Seraikella State. In addition to the Chief Medical Officer, the department had about five qualified doctors including a lady doctor and some qualified compounders and Dressers etc.<sup>158</sup>.

The numbers of patients varied from time to time. The report for the year 1940-41 show that there were 35,912 patients of which 140 were indoor patients and rest were out door patients. In the year 1941-42, the number increased to 37,756, of which 158 were indoor patients. Similarly in the year 1945-46, the total numbers of patients were 38,037, of which 146 (88 males and 58 females) were indoor patients. The number of vaccination done in the year 1940-41 and 1945-46 were 22,394 and 11,988 respectively. Vaccination was free in the



State. The operations performed during the year 1940-41 and 1945-46 were 536 and 541, respectively. The diseases mostly treated in the hospital were skin diseases, fever, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Typhoid, Cholera, Small -pox, Tu-berculosis, burning etc. The total expenditure incurred by the State towards the medical department in the year 1940-41, 1944-45 and 1945- 46 were Rs. 15,675, Rs. 14,400 and Rs. 21,382 respectively<sup>159</sup>.

Kharsawan State had a Charitable Dispensary and Hospital located at Capital town Kharsawangarh. The hospital had Chief Medical Officer with another doctor as his assistant and some Nurses and midwives. Besides this there were Ayurvedic Dispensaries at Joridha, under the supervision of a paid and qualified Kaviraj. There were some Homeopathic and Ayurvedic physicians in the State carrying on private practice also<sup>160</sup>. The diseases treated in the hospital were of various nature, the bulk of the cases being of Malaria, Diarrhoea, Bron-chitis, Cough and pneumonia, Cholera etc. The hospital performed operations also. The figures of number of operations done as could be made available from records were as follows:

Year	No. of patients
1934-35	150
1940-41	116
1941-42	193
1943-44	135
1946-47	109

There was arrangement for giving vaccination against small-pox in the hospital as well as in interior villages. The vaccination staff consisted of one whole-timer and four part-timers. Vaccine-Lymph was obtained from the Government Vaccination Depot at Namkum, Ranchi. Vaccination was given free of cost. The number of vaccination done , were as follows :

Year	No.of vaccination
1934-35	3751
1941-42	5925
1943-44	3722
1946-47	5410

The number of patients coming to the hospital was increasing. The numbers of both indoor and outdoor patients treated in the Hospital were as follows :

Year	Indoor	Outdoor
1933-34	36	6,088
1934-35	17	6,990
1940-41	14	6,586
1941-42	17	8,935
1942-43	49 (44 males, 5 females)	9,134
1943-44	66 (52 males- 14 females)	7,413
1945-46	30 (23 males-7, females)	10,434
1946-47	26 (24 males-2 females)	11,287

No Medical cess was levied in the State. The expenditure incurred in maintaining the Medical Department in the year 1934-35, 1941-42 and 1946-47 were Rs. 2,228/1/6, Rs. 6,200/12/3 and Rs. 12,424/ 9 annas respectively<sup>161</sup>. After merger of both the States in Bihar, these Hospital came under the administrative charge of Government of Bihar. The Civil Surgeon of Singhbhum became overhall incharge of all these medical institutions. The Seraikella hospital became the Sub-Divisional Hospital of Seraikella Subdivision<sup>162</sup>. Besides these the common man of both these states still believed that the diseases were caused by the anger of spirits. They still went to the witch doctor who prescribed sacrifices of a chicken or a goat. Thus the witch doctors who were known as Doori or Ojha had a good practice. Apart from the witch doctor, the common man had a great belief in the indigenous system of medicine which consisted in the use of various herbs, parts of plants, like root, f bark or leaf. Some of these herbs were used by the Vaidyas who practice Ayurvedic system of treatment<sup>163</sup>. From review of the municipal system of the two states and of the medical facilities available to the people, it can be safely concluded that the Ruling Chiefs did welfare work for their subjects and treated them very solicitously. This proves that the fuling Chiefs were enlightened although they were primarily feudal Chiefs.

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145. R.A.K.S., 1940-41, p. 18
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151. P.C. Roychaudhary, Singhbhum District Gazetteer, p. 182
152. R.A.S.S., 1941-42, p. 31, 1944-45, p. 40. ; 1945-46, p. 20.
153. P.C. Roy Chaudhary, op. cit., p. 182
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155. R.A.K.S., 1941-42, p. 14, 1946-47, p. 13.
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159. R.A.S.S., 1940-41, pp. 24-27 & Appendix-XIII, 1944-45, pp. 37; 1945-46, pp. 47-49 and Appendix-XII.
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161. R.A.K.S., 1934-35, pp. 8 and Appendix-XIV, 1941-42, pp. 29-30, 1946-47, pp. 27, 1943-44, pp. 27-29.
162. P.C. Roy Chaudhary, op. cit., p.151-160.
163. Ibid., P. 161.

## CHAPTER 7

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# ASPECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE

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### Social Life

Like other parts of Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharasawan States were also peopled by the tribals. But a good number of non tribal population was also found here since the very formation of the States. How the non-tribal people came to these areas is not known exactly, but it appears that the local Chiefs invited the non-tribals for assisting them in administration. About the 1615 A.D. Raja Durjan Sal of Chotanagpur proper was defeated by the troops of Jahangir and was kept a prisoner for twelve years in the Gwalior Fort. During his captivity he had associated himself with Hindu royalties and seen the splendour of the Mughal Empire. He and his successors surrounded themselves with Brahmin courtiers, Rajput administrators and servants and their court gradually assumed great splendour<sup>1</sup>. These events affected the Chiefs of the neighbouring areas also. They brought non-tribal people from outside their territories to their courts. Besides, some non-tribal people migrated into these States seeking livelihood<sup>2</sup>. This phenomenon of the influx of non-tribals must have followed the same pattern in these two States too. The non-tribals who dwelt in Seraikella and Kharasawan were mainly Rajputs, Brahmins, Kyasthas, Kurmis, Lohars, Tantis, Dhobis, Gwalas, Telis, Kumhars, Napis and Ghasis etc. On the other hand, the Hos, Mundas, Bhuiyans, Santhals, and Bhumijis were the principal tribal groups in this region. Moreover, a few Muslims and Christians also resided in this region<sup>3</sup>.

The mode of life of the non-tribal people of this area was the same as that of the people of other parts of the country. The ruling families in both the States were Rajputs and their relations were scattered throughout the territories. The feudal lords of Icha, Dugni and Banksai etc. were the relations of the ruling families. These Rajput families had marriage-relations with the Rajput families of other parts of India. Orissa was the nearest region with so many princely States and in most of the cases the

ruling houses of Seraikella and Kharsawan entered into matrimonial relationship with the ruling houses of Orissa<sup>4</sup>. They had marriage relations with the Rajputs of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh also. Brahmins, settled in this area, used to perform the religious rituals. Some Brahmins were associated with the temples of the state<sup>5</sup>. The chieftains and zamindars of Chotanagpur proper also brought Brahmins from Orissa and assigned lands to them for acting Pujaris or temple priests<sup>6</sup>. Similarly in Seraikella and Kharsawan States we find that Brahmin priests belonged to Orissa. Most of the Brahmin priests had migrated from Puri, Dhenkanal and parts of Orissa. Later some Brahmins from other places also moved to this area. Thus Mishras, Shuklas and Thvedis living in this area since a pretty long time originally belonged to Uter Pradesh, while Dubey Brahmins came from Orissa and Bagchis from Bengal. They were engaged in business and some others worked as money-lenders<sup>7</sup>.

The Kurmis were the next important caste in Seraikella and Kharsawan. They were believed locally to be the descendants of the immigrants from Bihar who came and settled down as domestic servants or petty businessmen. They gradually accumulated money and acquired land. They were short, sturly and dark complexioned, closely resembling in features the Dravidian tribes around them. It is believed by scholars like Herbert Risley that these Kurmis were perhaps a Hinduized branch of the Dravidian race. This was an example of the process of detribalisation operating in this area which prompted the local aboriginals to employ Brahmins for the worship of Hindu gods and for performing marriage ceremonies<sup>8</sup>. Many of these Kurmis spoke Bengali or Oriya<sup>9</sup>. They were also the best cultivators in the region<sup>10</sup>.

The other Castes among the Hindus that require some mention were Karan Kayasthas, Gowalas, Dhobas, Napits, Tantis, Lohars or Kamars, Kumhars and Ghasis etc. The Kayasthas usually held administrative jobs in the States and had also some agricultural lands for their livelihood. They lived in the towns only. The Gowalas or milkmen kept large herd of buffaloes and cows and sold milk and butter. They generally lived in the village as a community. Dhobis or Dhobas were the washerman while the Napits were the barbers of the area<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand the Tanti community used to weave coarse cloth for the people in the early period, but later on a large number of them also took to cultivation of land.

Similarly Lohars or Kamars were the smiths of the area while the Kumhars used to make earthen pots. These castes had penetrated into almost every village. The Ghasis were the sweeper class people but they were noted also as a criminal caste<sup>12</sup>. Besides these there were some

Marwari businessmen. Kansaris were a community who manufactured metal pots and ornaments<sup>11</sup>. Similarly there were some Sundis or Sufis whose main business was liquor<sup>14</sup>. Weaver class people known as Patras prepared cloth from Tassar cocoons, but they were very few, in number and the industry was in a primitive condition. There were braziers in Seraikella town known as Khandras. They prepared articles from brass and bell metal etc.<sup>15</sup>. These two classes of people lived in towns only.

In addition to the non-tribal elements some tribals also, e.g. the Bhuiyans, Bhumis, Hos, Santhals and Mundas were old inhabitants of the region. According to their tradition the Bhuiyans were the oldest settlers of Singhbhum<sup>16</sup> and they were found in Seraikella, Kharsawan, Jaisingarh, Porahat and Chandil. It appears that the Bhuiyans of this area originally belonged to a place known as Bhuj or Bhis on western side of Bhopal in the Central Provinces. According to their own tradition, they lived somewhere in Eastern India. They had their own king but due to an invasion from the west they were broken up and got dispersed<sup>17</sup>. Whatever might have been the original habitat of the Bhuiyans and whatsoever might have been the cause of their migration to this area, it appears that they were more numerous than other races in Singhbhum and the tributary States of Gangpur, Bonai, Keonjhar and Bamra in Orissa<sup>18</sup>. Mythology has it that perhaps they were the 'Baner' race (Monkey race) that aided Rama in his invasion of Lanka in the Ramayana period, because the areas which were occupied by these Bhuiyans are even now full of tradition relating to Ravana. There is also the traditions of 'Pawan-Ka-pur' (son of the wind) and these Bhuiyans of Singhbhum call themselves Pawanbansis (the children of wind). That they are the Radars of the Ramayana fame can be probably surmised from the surviving folk-lore. Later on, the Bhuiyans became Hinduized and child-marriage gradually gained ground. However, they did not accept the caste-system of the Hindus and priestly duties were not assigned to the Brahmins but to the people of their own race. Their shrines were not dedicated to Hindu gods or goddesses, but to their own race. In some of their shrines human sacrifices were offered every third year, and this continued till the country came under the British rule. During the same period the Bhuiyans lost their own dialect and gradually accepted Hindi, Bengali or Oriya, according to the area in which they lived<sup>19</sup>.

The Bhumis were another important tribe of Seraikella and Kharsawan. They were the offshoots of the Mundas of Ranchi and later acculturated themselves with the Bengali-speaking Hindu neighbours with whom they came into close contact. The social structure of the Bhumij society did not differ from that of the Hos and the Mundas. In this region

were three main social divisions of the Bhumij tribe based on locality : (1) Tamarias or Barabhumia (2) Desi or Singhbhumia (3) Dhalua or Dhalbhumia. These names were derived from the names of places where they once lived. The Tamarias derived name from Tamar, a pargana in the district of Ranchi, the Desi or Singhbhumia from Singhbhum and the Dhalua or Dhalbhumia from Dhalbhum. Of these, the Tamarias were accepted as socially superior to the other two. They had already become an endogamous group and had prohibited all sort of social intercourse with the other two and seemed to be far advanced on the path towards caste organisation. The Desi or Dhalua Bhumijis allowed intermarriages and interdining, but if any member of these two divisions happened to have any social connection, such as marriage and dining with the Tamarias, he was forthwith excommunicated. This attitude of the Desi and the Dhalua Bhumijis who accepted their own inferiority to the Tamarias, might have evolved as a measure of retaliation. These Bhumijis, like the other tribals of this region, built no temples, but they worshiped Jahar Buru in the form of a stone smeared with vermilion and set up in a sama or sacred grove near the village. This Jahar Buru was invariably composed of purely jungle trees such as sal and others. This Jahar Buru was supposed to be capable of blasting the crops, if not duly propitiated and its worship was a necessary preliminary to the commencement of agricultural operations. At Pundra, about two Kms to the north west of Seraikella town there was a seat of Jahar Bum at a place where a Kendu and Jahari tree were found peculiarly intertwined. All the villagers jointly participated in this worship without distinction of caste or tribe<sup>20</sup>. Some of them used the Mundari language (while those who lived in the eastern side of the area used Bengali language<sup>21</sup>).

The Hos, most important and numerous tribe of this region were physi a much finer people than the Bhumij, the Santhals or any of the Kolarians. The males were on average five feet and six inches in height, the women five feet two inches. Many high nosed and oval faced young girls were found who had delicate and regular features, finally chiselled straight noses and perfectly formed mouths and chins. The eyes, however, were seldom so large and bright as those of Pure Hindu maidens. Both men and women were noticeable for their fine erect carriage and long free stride<sup>22</sup>.

The Hos had no tradition of origin or migrations that could throw some light on their history. They generally accepted that they were of the same family as the Mundas, and that they came from Chutia Nag pur. They probably left Chutia Nag pur before their kinsmen there had

assumed the Sanskrit word Munda as their distinctive name. They brought with them their old constitution of confederate village communities under hereditary headmen, which system they have retained to the present day<sup>23</sup>. The Hos left Chotanagpur before the Mundas had elected their king as the chief of the area because the Hos have no such tradition, among their legends. The period of this Ho migration was probably century A.D. as some scholars point out<sup>24</sup>. In course of their migration they might have passed through the Tebo Ghat route (present Chaibasa Ranchi Bus route via Chakradharpur) and settled in Singhbhum area<sup>25</sup>. Still this route is the only route which connects Ranchi district with Sinum. As the Tebo Ghat touched the western portion of Seraikella south area of Kharsawan, some of them probably entered these regions and spread to other areas also<sup>26</sup>.

Other important tribes which lived in Seraikella and Kharsawan States were the Santhals and the Mundas. Though the Santhals lived; mostly in Dhalbhum, they were also found in sizeable numbers in the adjacent areas of Seraikella and Kharsawan. They migrated from the Present Santha Pargana to those areas which were known to abound in forests and where they were welcomed by the zamindars<sup>27</sup>. Thus in course of their "migration they entered Seraikella and Kharsawan and settled there. These L.I ti Santhals were mostly settled in the Kuchung Pir of Seraikella,<sup>28</sup> and were; good cultivators. Similarly the Mundas in the Kolhan and Bankhandi pir of Kharsawan belonged to the large Munda tribe of Ranchi plateau<sup>29</sup>. In physical features, language, social organisation, social customs and religious rites they resembled the Hos very closely<sup>30</sup>.

### **Marriage and related customs**

The marriage and related customs of the different tribes of this region did not show a varying pattern. These were almost the same everywhere with minor variations noticeable on account of the intrusion of some local customs and traditions. The tribals of this region considered marriage as essential for social existence. Without marriage no person was accepted as a full member of the tribe. Even the spirits and deities were sometimes supposed to be married. Adult marriage was the general rule among the tribals although due to Hindu influence the age of marriage was coming down<sup>31</sup>. However, in case of child marriage, the bride was generally required to be younger than the bridegroom. Generally men married between 20 and 25 years of age and women between 16 and 20 years. Among the Bhumij there was no fixed age for marriage. There was an instance at Ghutus, a small village near Seraikella town, of a girl of seven



years of age to have been married<sup>32</sup>. The Hos were divided into a number of exogamous groups called Killis (Septs)<sup>33</sup>. Marriage within the Killis (Septs) was strictly prohibited. Offenders were excommunicated but were allowed to re-enter the society on payment of a fine which was usually spent on communal feasts. However, marriage might not take place between parties related through the father in the direct line<sup>34</sup>. Usually a Ho tried to find a bride outside his village, because most of his co-villagers were generally of the same Killi. Similarly, a Ho did not marry outside the tribe as a rule, but those who worked in the mining and industrial centres contracted such alliances and when they came back to their villages they were not ostracised by the society<sup>35</sup>.

The payment of bride price which was called Gonong or Pan was considered essential for marriage. Among the Hos the bride price consisted of atleast 8 to 10 head of cattle, some money (atleast forty to fifty rupees), ornaments, besides 50 to 100 pots of illi (country made wine) and the cost of feeding the killi<sup>36</sup>. Among the Bhumij the amount of bride price was not fixed. It varied according to the status and individual beauty of the bride. The amount varied between a pair of cattle and even more than a pair. This system had a bad effect on the society because sometimes the bride price was so high that none could dare to marry. This was the reason for increasing number of unmarried males and females among the tribals of this region. The bride price was taken by the father or if he was dead, by the brothers or nearest male relations. The father tried to get as much as he could and the daughters usually sided with their father<sup>37</sup>. The boys and girls were free to choose their mate but marriage arranged by the parents was considered ideal<sup>38</sup>. In Ho society there were different types of marriages such as (1) Andi (2) Diku Andi, (3) Rajikhusi, (4) Oporipi and (5) Anader<sup>39</sup>.

### **Andi Marriage**

The orthodox form of marriage called Andi was arranged by the guardians of both sides with the consent of the bride and the Bridegroom. When a youngman had made his choice, he communicated the fact to his parents. After this a middleman or "Dutarn" was deputed for seeking necessary information about the girl and her family. If the information was satisfactory and the omens observed on the road propitious, an offering was made on the part of the youngman, and if it was received, the member of the deputation were invited to stay and were feasted. After staying at the residence of the prospective bride for a day, the deputation returned, again observing the signs carefully on the road. In

this manner the negotiation proceeded until most important question of the Gonong (Bride price) was discussed and settled. The bride price which would be paid to the bride was mutually approved by both the families<sup>40</sup>. Next, a deputation from the bride's family visited the bridegroom's house. If it was satisfied with the amount of money and cattle agreed upon, a day was fixed by the parents of the girl for the marriage<sup>41</sup>. Usually the date was fixed when the villagers were free from outside economic pursuits and when their granaries were full<sup>42</sup>. After settlement of everything about marriage, the bridegroom and his party proceeded to the bride's place for the Eraul ceremony. In this, the bride and bridegroom were each given a pot of rice-beer, and each distributed the liquor in leaf cups to the guests thronged round them. Then the bride and bridegroom each took a leaf-cup of the liquor. The bridegroom poured some of the contents of his cup into the bride's cup, and she returned the compliment. Drinking the liquor thus having been blended, the bride was admitted into her husband's kili and they became one. Then the bride was brought with singing, dancing and music to the bridegroom's house for the marriage. The bride and bridegroom were seated face to face, each on a low stool and the bridegroom took the dust of his own feet with the little finger of his left hand and marked the forehead of the bride with this dust, and then the bride in her turn, took the dust of her own feet with the middle finger of her right hand and marked the bridegroom's forehead with this dust. This was a symbolical expression of mutual regard for each other and a union on equal terms. There was no suggestion of either a symbolical or an actual subjugation of the one to the other. After this, the end of their body-clothes were tied together and thus they were happily united in a wedlock. The couple then came out of the house and joined the dance with the guests. However, due to the increasing contact with the so-called people of 'higher civilization', some of these customs were dying, out<sup>43</sup>. This orthodox form of marriage was usually very costly as it involved heavy expenditure in feasts and in the payment of Gonong. Hence there were alternative forms also. "Diku And: The 'Diku' Andi form of marriage was the outcome of a long association of the Hos with the Hindus. It was practised by only a few well-to-do families who lived in important Diku (non-aboriginal) villages. In this form of marriage, in addition to traditional tribal custom, some local Hindu rites had also been added such as participation of a Brahmin priest and the use of vermilion. In this ceremony the bride and bridegroom were dressed in yellow clothes with red borders. The bodies of the couple were

anointed with mustard oil and turmeric. The priest who was generally an Oriya Brahmin, brought a 'Salgram Sila' (black-fossiled stone-emblem of Shiva) before which the couple had to promise eternal fidelity and mutual protection. The bridegroom had to make a round of the bride for seven times with a steel knife in his hand, after which he had to paint the forehead of the bride with vermillion, and the latter did the same on the forehead of the bridegroom<sup>44</sup>.

#### **Rajikhusi (love-marriage or marriage by elopement)**

If a youngman and youngwoman loved each other and decided to marry and the parents on either side were unwilling to accede to their wishes, the couple might elope and live away from the village till such time as their parents revised their opinion and came round over to their views. There was no Gonong (bride-price) paid for such a marriage and no ceremony was required to solemnise their companionship. Sometime a small bride-price was fixed and handed over to the bride's parents to regularise the marriage<sup>45</sup>.

#### **Oporipi (Marriage by capture)**

Marriage by force or capture called Oporipi was also in vogue. But this system occurred rather rarely. When a youngman failed to win the heart of a girl or when one party did not agree to the marriage, the bridegroom forcibly carried away the bride from a festival or Bazar with the help of his friends. The show of force was often superficial and so also the show of resistance on the girl's part. Subsequently, a nominal bride-price was settled and the marriage was regularised<sup>46</sup>.

#### **Anader (Marriage by intrusion)**

In this system the girl forced herself into the family of her lover where she was seldom welcome. This extreme conduct might be due to a sincere attachment which induced the girl to sacrifice her position, prestige and material comforts to her love for the youngman. Two reasons prompted her action. If a youngman and a youngwoman fell in love, and if for some reason or other they could not marry, the girl might take the risk of intruding into the family of her lover to secure her position. Again there were cases in which a young woman might admire a young man and finding no possibility of an alliance, the only way open to her was to resort to Anader. In such cases the girl was generally severely chastised by the boy's parents. Paying no heed to this she attended to household duties and was ultimately accepted as bride. This form of marriage was also very rare<sup>47</sup>.

Among the Bhumij also different forms of marriage were prevalent. The usual form of marriage system in Bhumij society was marriage by purchase like the Andi form of marriage among the Hos in which bridegroom paid certain bride-price to the girl. It varied according to the status of the contracting parties. Sometimes it depended upon the individual beauty of the bride also. The amount varied between Rs.40/- and Rs. 60/- in cash and a pair or more of cattle. The actual marriage rites of Bhumij took place at night but among the Hos there was no such restriction. But generally the marriage of Bhumij took place in the house of the bride. However, during their marriage, when the date was fixed, the marriage procession consisting of the bridegroom himself, his father and sometime his mother, together with brothers, uncles and other relatives and friends of both sexes started for the bride's house. When the procession reached the village it did not enter it at once but generally stopped outside under some tree where the bride's father and relatives, both male and female, accompanied by musicians playing as Dholki (drums) and Mandal (One type of drum) etc. met the bridegrooms party and accorded a formal reception to them. Then the procession proceeded to the house of the bride where marriage ceremony was to be solemnised. The place where marriage was to take place was rectangular in shape and consisted of a roof of salleaves on four bambon posts. It was called 'Marwa'. During the marriage the Brahmin priests were employed. A fire was made and the Brahmin priests performed "homyagya" by pouring clarified butter on the fire alongwith the recitation of mantras (a sacred hymns). The 'homyagya' was considered as the most essential rite in the ceremony. It was followed by Sindur Dan. Like the other tribals, Bhumij marriage was always attended with much merrymaking. Dancing and singing was on for days together and the guests were always and everywhere enlivened with cups of handia (rice beer)<sup>48</sup>.

Besides this general method of marriage there was another form of marriage known as 'Tanatani'. When a youngman fell in love with a girl or settled his mind on a particular girl and did not receive a favourable reception from her father or guardians, he secured the help of some of his young friends and relatives and seized the girl at the market place, in fair or on a festive occasion. He occasionally carried her by force to his own home. On hearing this, the father of the bride together with a few friends and relatives usually went to the house of the bridegroom to fetch the bride-price. Generally in such cases the bride price was higher than the usual. The marriage or union between them was settled after the bride-price was paid. But if the parties did not come to an agreement about the

bride-price, the girl returned to her guardians and she was married to another man in the usual manner. Abduction did not entail any social stigma on the girl. During the period of forced confinement, the girl was neither molested nor any encroachment made on her modesty<sup>49</sup>.

Marriage among the Santhals was generally love marriage, but some marriages were arranged by the parents or guardians of the boys and girls. These marriages were considered more respectable. The price to be paid for the girl was average five rupees, with presents of clothes to her parents. After this a day was fixed for a preliminary feast and another for the marriage itself. On a fixed day the bridegroom and his friends with music set out for the house of the bride. As they approached the village, they were escorted by the bride's party to the house of the bride. Both the parties mingling together sang, danced and feasted in front of the bride's chamber. In the last hours of the night, the bride was brought to the bridegroom in a basket by her brother or brother-in-law. Then came the inevitable 'Sindurdan ceremony'<sup>50</sup>.

Among the Bhuiyans of this region, a girl was rarely married before she was fully grown up<sup>51</sup>. Great freedom of courtship was allowed and slips of morality, so long as they were confined to the tribe, were not much heeded. The marriage took place in the house of the bride's father. When the wedding ceremony commenced, the bride and bridegroom each took seven handfuls of rice and threw them at each other. Then the bridegroom accompanied by the bride's maids or her female relations, performed the "bhanwar" or circuit, seven times round a stake placed in the centre of a shed erected in the courtyard. After this the bridegroom acknowledged her as his wife and the priest (Byga) tied their clothes together and they were then left to themselves till morning. In the morning they were escorted to the tank and bathed together. The Byga untied the knot as they entered the water. They then returned to the house and were made to stand in the courtyard with pitchers of water on their heads. The contents of the pitches were refreshingly poured over them and the ceremony ended with a great feast. Sometime the Bhuiyans commenced the morning ceremony by grings urid dal (*Phaseolus-Mungo*) and mixing it with warm water. The relations of the bride washed the bodies of both with the mixture. They were then anointed with oil, and the relations of the bridegroom touched his feet, knees, chest and head with mango-leaves. Then the bride and bridegroom took branches of the mahu tree (*Bassia latifolia*) in their hands, and holding them went down to tank or stream and after throwing the branches in the water bathed together. Returning they performed the

'bhanwer' round a branch of Mahua tree set up by the priest and the ceremony concluded with a feast<sup>52</sup>.

Divorce system was also in vogue among the tribals of the region. The woman was granted divorce if the husband was suffering from incurable and contagious diseases or was cruel. The husband could divorce the wife if she proved incorrigible, lazy, barren or guilty of infidelity or if she was suspected of being a witch. The case was decided by the panchayat of the village. A divorced woman was allowed to remarry. Similarly widows were also pennitted to remarry. In this case the yonger brother of the fonner husband had a priority of claim, but on no account could she be married to the ekler brother. If the younger brother did not press his claims on the widow, she might marry any other person who was not a member of her father's killi. A man could have as many wives as he could maintain. Few, however, could afford the luxury of more than one, and the custom did not favour the taking of a second wife except when the first was barren. Among the Hos a man could marry two sisters but in such cases he must marry the ekler sister first<sup>53</sup>. Thus polygamy was a rare practice.

### Birth rites

There was no special ceremony associated with the child bearing period among the tribals of this region. When an woman felt labour pain, she informed her mother-in-law or any other female member of the family. Generally a midwife belonging to the Ghasi caste was engaged to attend at the time of delivery. Immediately after the birth of the child both parents were regarded as being impure for a certain period, the length of which varied. During this period they might not eat with or touch any of their relatives or neighbours. Generally, the period of pollution was not fixed but it was observed for eight days. On the morning of the eighth day the child's head was washed and it was bathed in tapid water. Among the Bhumij, on this day they employed a Hindu barber who shaved the male members of the family and pared the nails of all the members of the family, both male and female. He then pared the nails of the new born child also. Thus the customary rites of the family were over. The usual remuneration of the barber was four annas and uncooked food and that of the midwife two annas for a girl and four annas for a boy. But the amount varied with the status and financial condition of the family. The Hos did not employ the Hindu barber. On the completion of one month a man from a different Killi shaved the father and pared the nails of both the parents. After this, they were regarded as ceremonially clean and allowed to resume their duties<sup>54</sup>.



Naming was done by the process of divination. Two grains of 'urid' pulse or paddy were thrown into a vessel of water in succession. If the grain floated, the selected name was adopted, if not, the name was rejected and another was put the same test. Generally the eldest son was named after his grandfather or after the grand-uncle or uncles<sup>55</sup>.

### **Funeral customs**

Both burial and cremation were practised by the tribes of this region, but due to difficulty in procuring fire-wood poor people were compelled to abandon cremation and resort to burial. But the rich section invariably cremated the dead bodies of the adults while the children, both of the rich and the poor, were buried alike<sup>56</sup>. After death the body was carefully washed with tepid water and anointed with turmeric and oil. Then the corpse dressed in a new piece of cloth and carried to the grave. The grave was about 2 mts. in length, 1 mt. in width and 1 mt. in dept. The corpse lay on its back at the bottom of the pit and some coins were put inside the mouth. Grain of rice or paddy, some of the used clothes, plates and cups were also placed inside. The pit was then covered with earth<sup>57</sup>. In case of cremation, the charred bones were put inside a small earthen pot whose mouth was covered with a new piece of cloth. This earthen pot was placed inside a hole which was subsequently covered with earth. On this was placed the stone slab<sup>58</sup>. In the Hos the stone slab was called "Sasandin". After funeral they brought this 'sasan-din' and placed it at the grave. The stone slab was kept in a horizontal position. The size of the stone slab to some extent indicated the economic status of the family of the deceased. The sasan (cemetery) of the killi was generally situated within the village and near about the residence of members of the killi. These were located on prominent sites and were almost invariably shaded by large tree. Each killi had its own 'sasan'. When the 'sasan' of a killi was not there in a village, its dead body was carried to the nearest sasan belonging to the same killi. After death all the family members of the deceased went into mourning for a period of nine days. During this period they were regarded as ceremonially unclean and must not eat meat, eggs or fish. Nor they were allowed to anoint their body with oil. All old earthen cooking utensils were allowed to throw away on the third day and substituted with new ones. On the 10th day the mourners were shaved and the nails pared and thus the period of mourning ended<sup>59</sup>.

### **Position and status of the tribal women of the region**

The position of tribal women in the region's society was high. The management of the house was entirely in their hands. In addition to their

household work, they had also to take large share in the work of the fields. Except ploughing and sowing which were the monopoly of the males, the women helped in all the other operations of the field. Thus they were cook, servant, nurse, mother and field worker, all rolled in one. They were not the slaves of the men, nor a burden. They freely mixed with the male members of the community and took part in all the social functions and ceremonies. Legally they could not inherit their father's property nor take an active or leading part in the religious rites and ceremonies. But in spite of these disabilities they were a factor to be reckoned within the society and a powerful force acting behind the scene<sup>60</sup>.

### **Dress and ornaments of the people**

Regarding dress there was a slight difference between tribal and non-tribal people of this area. The majority of the non-tribal people of Seraikella and Kharsawn used dhoti and kurta as their main dress. The people who were engaged in agricultural work did not use a shirt or an underwear and ganji unless they were attending a ceremony or a mela. The women used sari either coarse or of the better variety, according to their financial status. An upper wear for the females namely-Jhula Kurta (blouse) was becoming common. On the other hand, the dress of the tribals was very simple and scanty. The hot climate of the area also lent a good deal to the wearing of scanty dresses. The traditional dress of a tribal youngman was a narrow piece of cloth the waist and fastened at the back. It was called Botoi. This consisted of a-piece of cloth varying from four to five yards in length and usually reaching to the knees. The women used to put on a 'lahanga' covering the portion from the waist down to the knees while the rest of the body remained uncovered. Educated tribals and those who lived near the towns adopted the dress of their civilized neighbours. The men generally used dhoti to cover the lower parts and women put on mill made sari<sup>61</sup>. The Hinduised Bhumi women had adopted the custom of covering the head with veil. The children went about naked. Formerly the clothes used by the people were home spun and locally woven by the Hindu Tantis (weavers) but in due course they were replaced by foreign made clothes<sup>62</sup>.

### **Ornaments**

The people of this region were very fond of ornaments. Both men and women, tribals and non-tribals, used different types of ornaments. These ornaments were made of gold, silver and brass etc. The people decorated their arms, necks, ears, nose and feet with these jewellerys. Imitationjewels, lac and brass were used for making cheaper ornaments.

For the arms men and boys generally used an ornament known as 'bank'. It was a solid piece of silver or gold which was twisted to adorn the right upper arm. Various kinds of amulets put either in hollow, cylindrical or flattened piece of gold or silver were used as 'tabiz'<sup>63</sup> and ornaments of gold or silver called Bata, Kara and Pahunchi were different variations of bracelets used by boys and men. Amulets in gold or silver cases were also put on the arms or the wrists<sup>64</sup>. Rings made of iron, copper or brass were used by men on the fingers<sup>65</sup>.

The spangles gummed on forehead known as Tikulis, Bindis or Tika, were used by the women. The nose ornaments known as Nathiya were used by the women. Nose rings were generally called 'Nakfuli'<sup>66</sup>. The ear ornaments, were made of gold, silver or brass and took the forms of small rings with small knobs attached to the pendant with fine pin-points in relief were also used by the tribals<sup>67</sup>. Other ear ornaments known as 'Jhumhimya' were long flat pendants were used by the women<sup>68</sup>.

The neck was the most favoured part of the body in female physiognomy for the wearing of ornaments. There were different kinds of necklaces used by the women. "Chandrahara" was one type of necklace used by the women. Similarly, Kanthi was also used by men and women<sup>69</sup>. 'Ananta' was one type of ornament which was used on the arms. For the fingers, the women used ring, with a small mirror attached to it, commonly known as 'arsi'. Similarly 'Paigub' or 'Painjni' anklets with bells were used by the women. This was an important ornament given as a part of marriage gifts<sup>70</sup>.

### **Festivals**

Almost all the important festivals such as Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Diwali, Holi, Ganesh Puja, Sivraatre etc. were celebrated in this region<sup>71</sup>. Similarly Muhammadans, as in the rest of India, celebrated their Muharram by taking out a procession with Tazias. They also observed Idd by offering the congregational Namaz<sup>72</sup>. But some peculiar festivals, which were observed in Singhbhum and neighbouring areas, were also celebrated in this area. This region had an important feature of a large number of Melas that had grown out of the observance of particular festivals and pujas. Some of the festivals were connected with agricultural operations. Besides this there were several festivals which were observed by the tribes of this area also.

### **Chait Parab or Spring carnival**

'Chait' Parab was a great festival in the area and the famous 'Chhau

dance' was staged for four nights at Seraikella on this occasion<sup>73</sup>. This festival was held in honour of Lord Shiva. It was observed on the last five days of the month of Chait correspond with the months of March and April. All the people of this area, both prince and pauper, joined in this festival. Dances and music played a significant part in this festival too<sup>74</sup>. During the time not only in Seraikella town, but in some other places also these Chait festival and 'melas' were observed by the people. At Gitalata village, about 12 Kms from Rajkharsawan Railway station, a big mela usually assembled. It attracted about two thousand people. The fair was associated with the Shiva temple of the village. Similarly at Bana village in the present Rajnagar block a fair was held on the occasion of Chaitra Sankranti. During this fair large number of stalls were erected for the sale of sweet-meats, stationary items, domestic utensils and toys of many designs. Chief item of entertainment in the fair was the tribal folk dance and drama applauded by all the visitors<sup>75</sup>.

### **Makar Parab or Makar Sankranti**

Makar Parab was a great festival of the Seraikella and Kharsawan States. It was observed on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. All the people of this area observed this festival with great pomp. A week before the festival day many shops of clothes, stationary goods and other articles were opened in Seraikella and Kharsawan towns. During the Sankranti day, all the people used to wear new clothes after their morning bath and welcomed the new year. On the occasion Melas were held in different places of this region, especially at Saharhera near Adityapur, confluence of the river Kharkai and Subernarekha, Mundakati and Khokro village near Rajnagar, Kurli village and Dobo near Chandil and Dalni village near Nimdih<sup>76</sup>.

### **Tushu Parab**

During Makar Parab, in the neighbouring areas of Seraikella and Kharsawan which touched Ranchi and Manbhum (present Purulia district of West Bengal) people observed Tushu also. It was an important festival of Chotanagpur including Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>77</sup>. Tushu was a peculiar female deity worshipped in those areas. This deity was called after Tush, meaning husk. The aboriginal agricultural people invented this deity, who, if propitiated, would protect their paddy from being converted into husk. They gave her the name of Tush and a more endearing name Tusala was also added later. The religious ceremony, connected with the deity was confined generally to young girls. On this occasion, the girls placed lighted

earthen lamps in a circle round the wide-mouthed and round-bottomed earthen pot called 'Malsa' filled with 11 husk and decorated with seasonal flowers. There after they placed this pot upon a throne and carried it through the village. The worship of Tushu continued for thirty days. The girls of village sang songs every night before they retired to sleep. This process continued for twenty nine days<sup>78</sup>. On the night of the 30th day a vigil was kept up for the whole night by singing songs, as if to keep Tushu awake. This was called Tushu-Jagan. On the morning of the next day they joined in a procession, singing songs all the way to a neighbouring river or tank and took a holy dip in the water with the Tushu pots on their heads. Thus they immersed the Tushu deity. After their return home they sat down and ate the rice cakes of the festival generally called Chhabri, Gorgoria or Sija-pitha etc<sup>79</sup>.

#### **Ratha Yatra (The car festival)**

Ratha Yatra festival was held on the occasion of Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath in the month of Asadh (June-July). The Ratha (Chariot) of Lord Jagannath started from the Jagannath temple of the town and reached another temple where it took rest for nine days and after that it returned again. During this period a small mela was held at the temple where Lord Jagannath took rest. People from all parts of the area came to Seraikella and Kharsawan to have a look at Lord Jagannath on the car<sup>80</sup>.

#### **Rajaswala Sankranti or Rojo Parab**

Rajaswala Sankranti was a peculiar festival of Seraikella and Kharsawan region. This festival was observed on the last day of Asadh, (June-July) and it was popularly known as Rojo Parab or Jhula Parab. Both the tribals and the non-tribals observed this festival. On this day people did not plough the land as the earth was considered to be in her menses period<sup>81</sup>. During the day people of the villages, specially girls, used to play in Jhula (Swings) and enjoy themselves.

#### **Mangala Puja**

This festival was celebrated on the last Tuesday of the month of Chait. In this puja people worshipped the Mangala Devi and offered cock to the deity. The peculiarity of the puja was that although it was held in the houses of scheduled castes but even high caste Hindus took part in it and offered the cock etc. This was the only occasion when the scheduled castes people got religious importance<sup>82</sup>.

**Mansa Puja**

Mansa, the Deity presiding over the snakes, was worshipped in the month of Sravan (July-August) for two to three days. Flowers, Bel-leaves and sweetmeats were offered as in all other rites. Milk and ganja (the tops of hemp) formed special offering to the deity. In addition to these, one of the following animals and birds, namely, goats, ducks, pigeons and cocks were sacrificed<sup>83</sup>.

**Bhadu Puja**

Bhadu Puja was celebrated in those areas of Seraikella and Kharsawan which formerly belonged to Manbhum. There was a story about the celebration of this festival. It was said that an ancestor of the Raja Sahib of Kashipur (an Estate in West Bengal) had a fair looking beloved daughter, Bhadu by name, who died before her marriage in the month of Bhadra. As an honour to the princess people celebrated this festival in the month of Bhadra. According to another version of the origin of Bhadu Puja, one Raja of Kashipur has five sons and only one daughter, named Bhadraswari whom Raja loved more dearly than any of his sons. The marriage of this beautiful girl was settled. On the day of her marriage when the bridegroom and his party arrived and all the necessary arrangements for the wedding were made, the lovely girl either died or committed suicide. The Raja in the story further runs, becoming mad with grief, was given to understand that the funeral ceremony was really the marriage ceremony and that the princess who had gone to her husband's house would return in the month of Bhadra. So long as the Raja lived he did not, it was said, recovered from the attack of insanity. So, his men prepared every year in the month of Bhadra an image of Bhadreshwari and celebrated the festival with grandeur, the occasion being her coming back to her father's house. Like the Puja of Tush the unmarried girls of the village celebrated this Puja. Bhadu was represented in the form of a Kumari (maiden) and it was celebrated like the Tushu Jagran. The most important function of the ceremony was the last night, popularly called Bhadu Jagran, resembling the Shivratri. Special Bhadu songs were composed and sung during the festival. Every village had one image of Bhadu where the girls of the village assembled and sung songs<sup>84</sup>.

**Pauri Devi Puja**

Pauri Devi was the chief deity of the area. Originally she was the favourite deity of the Bhuiyans, but later on the deity was worshipped



by the whole people of Seraikella and Kharasawan. This deity was annually worshipped in the month of Jyastha (May-June) and again in Asadh (June-July) on any two days, according to their convenience. Specially in the villages of the Bhumis it was performed for timely rains and welfare of the village. During this puja all the inhabitants of the village, irrespective of caste or tribe, participated in it. The worship took place on two days as mentioned above on two different sites specially associated with the deity and situated on the two different sides of the village-north and south. If the Jyastha rites took place on the northern side, the Asadh rites would be performed on the southern extremity and vice-versa. All the villagers, whether tribals or non-tribals never reaped their early crops before the performance of the Asadh puja. Flowers and Bell (Aegel Marmelos) leaves together with ladoo (sweetmeats) formed the major portion of the offerings. A red cock and a he-goat were also sacrificed by the Naya (the village priest). The meat of these animals was not taken home but was cooked on the spot and eaten by all the Bhumis present, while the head of the sacrificed animal formed the perquisite of the Naya who took it home. This was the usual custom of worshipping Pauri devi in the villages. Besides this, the Pauri was worshipped at Pauri merh near the town of Seraikella under a number of trees of the sal family. Here, once a year, on a particular day, all the people of Seraikella assembled with animals for sacrifice and rice which they offered to the goddess and partook of it at the place Rs. In this connection it may be mentioned here that even today there is a big Pauri temple at Seraikella in the palace of the Ruling Chief where only a Bhuiyan priest has the right to perform the puja. People in the general are not allowed to enter even the compound of the temple. None has even the right to see the Pauri Devi except the Pujari and the Chief of Seraikella.

### **Nua Khia Parab**

The Nua Khia Parab was held on the last day of the month of Asadh, when the first fruits of the new crops were offered to the presiding deity of the village. After this puja the villagers started eating the new fruits. The cultivators abstained from the work that day<sup>46</sup>. Both tribals and non-tribals observed this festival.

### **Karam Puja**

Karam festival was observed both by the aboriginals and the non-aboriginals. In the month of Bhadra, branch of sal tree or Karam tree (*Nuclea parvifolia*) was planted in any courtyard which was known as Akhara. It was performed on the Ekadesi day (eleventh day of lunar

fortnight) of Bhadra (August-September). This was observed by a twenty-four hour fasting and the night was spent in the singing and dancing round the branch of the tree planted in the Akhara<sup>87</sup>.

### **Ind Puja**

Ind Puja or Idrotsava was observed by the people in memory of God Indra in the month of Bhadra<sup>88</sup>. During the day the people followed the Ruler in a procession to a ground which was called "Ind Maidan" where after offerings and homage to God Indra people prayed for good rains, good crops, and prosperity of the State. A huge umbrella about 15 mts. high was hoisted by the Ruler in the ground as a symbol of the authority of his State from which all people irrespective of caste or creed could expect protection, justice and fair play<sup>89</sup>.

### **Bana Puja and Asadri Puja**

Bana Puja performed on Shukla tritya day corresponded with early May. The puja was performed as an invocation for good crops. A goat or chicken was sacrificed. Similarly Asadri puja was observed by the cultivators in the month of Asadh. This puja took place before transplantation of paddy<sup>90</sup>.

### **Maghe Parab**

Maghe Parab was the main festival of the Hos which took place in the month of Magh (January-February) after the harvesting was over. At each village the festival continued for seven days. On this occasion the Hos put on new costumes, ate delicious food and organised dances<sup>91</sup>. On the festival day the priest of the village sacrificed to Desauli (the sing bonga) three fowls, a cock, and two hens, one of which had to be black. Then he offered some flowers of the Palas tree (*Butea frondosa*), bread made of rice flour and sesamum seeds. The sacrifice and offerings were made by the village priest, if there be one, or if not, by any elder of the village who possessed and knew the necessary legendary lore. He prayed that during the year they were about to enter, they and their children might be protected from all misfortunes and sicknesses and that they might have reasonable rains and good crops. Prayer was made in some places for the souls of the departed. At this period an evil spirit was supposed to infest the locality. In order to get rid of it, the men, women and children went in the procession round the village, with sticks in their hands as if for beating, going and wild chanting and shouting till they felt assured that the bad spirit must have fled. They made noises enough to frighten a legion. After these

ceremonies, the people have themselves upto feasting and drinking Immoderately rice-bear<sup>92</sup>. This Maghe festival, no doubt, provided opportunities for young people of both sexes to indulge in amorous adventures and for the villagers to get drunk, but it also afforded scope for selection of partners, which was extremely important in view of the tradition limit to the period of marriage and excessive bride-price prevalent. Marriage among the Hos could only be performed within a certain specific period, always after the Maghe festival. The girls of the village found their friends among the visitors from other villages, and boys their partners from the girls of other villages. The songs sung and known as Maghe Rag were mostly amorous. This Maghe festival was the time, the season for love, and it was no wonder that people eagerly awaited the return of the festival every year<sup>93</sup>. Bhumijs also celebrated this festival in the name of Maghe Puja. During the puja the Naya (the village priest) secured a cock from any house of the village without any opposition. The bird was then taken to the place of worship and sacrificed by the priest<sup>94</sup>. Similarly Bhuiyans also observed this festival in the name of Maghe Jatra. Thus this festival marked the termination of the agriculture season. It was the festival of joking and thanks giving for the blessings of the outgoing year and of preparation for fresh labours in the incoming year with its manifest dangers<sup>95</sup>.

### **Baha Parab or Festival of flowers**

The next important festival among the Hos was Baha Parab. This took place when the sal tree was in bloom for the first time in the year. Sal flowers were gathered by the village youths and girls at the sacred groves, offerings were made to the village Dessauli with new-al blossoms, rice-bear and fowl's meat. Puja was followed by dancing. The dancing was comparatively quieter than in the case of Maghe-Parab and no open breach of decorum was perceptible on this occasion. One was not to eat new fruits of the jungles or use sal leaves for making leaf plates or cups until the Baha Parab was over. This festival observed by the Santhals also<sup>96</sup>.

### **Sohrai Festival**

Among the Santhals, just, like the Maghe Parab, Sohrai was celebrated after the paddy harvest in December-January. This was an occasion for, the worship of domestic animals which were cleaned and decorated. The festival lasted for five days and the deity who presided over cattle sheds as well as the ancestral spirits were worshipped. It was alleged that during the Sohrai and the Maghe Parab the Santhals and

the Hos, indulged in a variable saturation, giving themselves up to dancing, drinking, singing and sexual licence. While it is true that in these festivals, the tribal folk indulged in full and free enjoyment but the picture of licentiousness and debauchery drawn by foreign as well as Indian authors was very much exaggerated<sup>97</sup>.

Besides all these festivals many other festivals were observed by the people of this area. Some festivals were borrowed from the neighbouring areas. Gamha Purnima, Rasha Purnima, Kumar Purnima, Putapana Sankranti etc. were the festivals borrowed from Orissa. Gamha Parab was celebrated on the new moon day of Sravan (July-August) when cows were worshipped. Rasha Purnima was observed on full moon day of Kartik (October-November) in memory of the naval glory of Orissa. Kumar Purnima was observed on full moon day of Aswin (September-October) by unmarried girls only. Puta Pana Sankranti was celebrated on the first day of Baisakh<sup>98</sup>.

On the other hand, there were some more festivals which were more or less exclusively observed by the tribal people of Seraikella and Kharsawan. "Damurai" festival was celebrated in the month of May at the time of sowing the first rice crop. A he-goat and a cock were sacrificed and ancestral spirits were worshipped. 'Haroparab' was another festival which was performed in the month of June when the leveller was used for the first time on the transplanted plots. Puja was offered to Dessauli and Jahira Buru to secure blessings for good crops. 'Jomnama' or eating the new rice festival took place in the month of August when the upland rice ripened. In this festival the first fruits of the harvest were offered to Sing Bonga along with a white cock. Similarly 'Kalam Puja' which was a kind of thanks giving ceremony to Sing Bonga for giving a good harvest was observed either before starting the thrashing operations or when thrashing operation was over<sup>99</sup>.

In addition to all these festivals there were some Melas which were held in different parts of these two States and which were celebrated just like the fair festival. Among the Melas Makar Sankranti mela, Basant Panchani mela, Kati Shivratri mela and Diwali mela etc. were prominent.

### **Makar Sankranti Mela**

During the time of Makar Sankranti, there were held many melas in different parts of this region. As Makar was the chief festival of the area, people celebrated this mela with great festivity. In village Saharbera, 5 Kms north-east of Adityapur and on the confluence of Kharkai and Subarnarekha, a Makar mela was organised by the people. About 10,000

persons assembled in this fair. During the fair people worshipped lord Shiva also. Similarly in the Rajnagar area was held a fair at Munda Kati and another at Khokro village during the Makar Sankranti and about 5,000 people came to attend the fairs at both the places. A fair was held on this occasion at Dalmi village of Nandih area also and was attended by a large number of persons<sup>100</sup>.

#### **Mrig-Chingra Mela (a fair for the ladies)**

Mrig Chingra is a place situated about 2 kms. south-east of Seraikella on the Bank of Kharkai river. There were many rocks of different types and shapes at this place. It is said that during the time of 'Banbas' (exiles) the Pandavas had travelled through this region and had stayed here also<sup>101</sup>. Just after the first Saturday of Maker Sankranti in the month of January, was held a big 'Mela' on that particular spot and was known as Mrig Chingra mela. It is peculiar to note that only girls could participate in this mela. No male was allowed to enter this mela. The girls took bath, cooked food and played there. Shops came up on the eastern bank of the river and the Mrig Chingra was situated on the south side of the river so that shopkeepers could not watch the mela where the girls had their exclusive games and sports. The actual date of its inception is not known but it is said that since the establishment of the State people gathered in this mela. Similarly the reason why only the girls were allowed to participate is also not known.

#### **Basant Panchami Mela**

A two-day fair was held on the occasion of Basant Panchami in the month of Magh (January-February) at Kenduadi village near Gobindpur in Rajnagar area. This fair attended by about 5,000 persons irrespective of caste or creed.

#### **Shivratri Mela**

A two-day fair was held on the occasion of Shivratri in the month of Vaisakh (April-May) at village Champur near Chandil. This fair was attended by about one thousand people every year. A large number of shops of sweets and stationery goods were opened in this fair<sup>102</sup>.

#### **Diwali Mela**

Diwali and Kali Puja were so popular in this area that in Kharasawan and surrounding areas a big fair, the largest of its kind in the State, lasting for about a week was held at Kharsawangarh. A large quantity of bell-metal and brass utensils were also sold in this fair. Similarly a Diwali

Mela was held at Telisai situated about 5 Kms. away from Rajkherasawan. This fair was started in the year 1944 near the temple of Kali at that place. The fair provided several recreational items for the visitors such as group-dance, small circus party, merry-go-round and cock-fighting<sup>103</sup>. Thus we find that there existed many fairs and festivals in the Seraikella and Kharsawan region. They became a part of the culture of this region and were celebrated by all people jointly amidst great joy.

### **Food and Drinks**

Generally the diet of the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan consisted of items grown in the area or easily available. Some of the food items were borrowed from the neighbouring districts of Orissa also. Rice was the principal food as it was the main crop of the area. The use of vegetables and Dal (pulses) was not common, specially among the tribals where sag (leaf vegetables) took the place of dal. wheat also formed part of the diet but was not very popular. A favourite food of the people was rice mixed with water. This was known as 'Pakhai' to which salt was added for taste. There were many other rice preparations which were used popularly by the people. These were chopped rice known as chira, fried rice called morhi or Bhonja forming the common item of ulfin for both tribal and non-tribal people of the area. Some special dishes prepared from Chira or Chora and Bhonja known as Bhuja Muhan Chuda Muhan and Bhuja Kunda etc. were used by the people. Meat and fish were also common food for those who could afford. Eggs formed another item of food for some people. Dried fish was relished by some sections along with the tribals for whom it was a delicacy. The taste for dried fish was indigenous to the region and obviously it had come from Orissa where dried fish was commonly taken. Besides these there were so many dishes cooked during festivals and on other holy occasions. During Makar Sankranti people used Arisa Pithas which were prepared from rice. Similarly Manda Pitha, Pua Pitha, Mal Pua, Birhi Pua Pitha and Birhi Boda which people ate from time to time. Besides Chapati there were variations of sweet meats such as Khaja, Gaja, Satpur, Mithai, Sard Puri, Ghee bhor and Mencha etc. Achar (pickles) was not so much used by the people of this area except a few. Milk, curd, butter and ghee were not commonly used<sup>104</sup>.

The tribals of this region more or less used the same food as the non-tribals. The main food of the tribal people was boiled rice. This boiled rice was prepared in the night before and allowed to stand over still morning with water added to it. known as Basi (stale). During



lunch and dinner they used this *basi* with one or two Chillis, onions and a small pinch of salt<sup>105</sup>. Every house had generally an attached plot for kitchen garden, where common vegetables like spinach (*palak*), pumpkin (*konhara*), gourd (*Kaddu*), brinjal (*Baigen*) etc. were grown. Vegetables like *Fulgobbi* (cauli- flower), *Bandgobhi* (cabbage) or tomato were also used by the people. Mustard oil was used as a cooking medium and ghee was seldom used. Spices were simple, namely chillis and turmeric. When possible the tribals supplemented their frugal diet with fish and meat. For fishing they used different varieties of creels and baskets made of bamboo. These were fixed in water course and were constructed in such a fashion that fishes which entered the basket were unable to find an exit. Pigs or fowls were rare in the houses. The flesh of goat was luxury for them. There was no objection to eating beef when available but the use of it was prohibited by the Rulers within their states. Birds were sometime killed with bows and bolts to relief the monotony of the diet. They took various kinds of meat except the flesh of monkey, bear, snake and tiger. The animals they hunted and relished as food were wild buffaloes, pigs, Sambar, porcupine, red deer and barking deer, while peacocks, jungle fowls and pigeons were trapped and domesticated to supply them with food during the rainy season. Milk or any of its preparations was not used by the tribals of this region, though there was no specific taboo in this matter<sup>106</sup>.

As regards drinks, next to boiled rice, home brewn rice-beer known as *handia*, *illi* or *diang* was an important item of diet among the tribals. But a section of non-tribals also liked this drink<sup>107</sup>. Besides people also used country liquor which was prepared from *Mahua* flower. The sale of the country wine was also very common among both tribals and non-tribals. Tea was becoming common among labour, workers and middle class people. Smoking *Bidis* (country cigarettes) and cheap cigarettes was also common among the workers in the factories. Chewing of betel was very common, specially among the Oriya communities<sup>108</sup>.

### **Songs and Dances**

The people of this region were very fond of songs and dances. As the area was inhabited by different castes, races and tribes, there were various types of songs and dances. Some of the festivals had their special songs also.

### **Tushu Songs**

As the *Tushu Parab* was celebrated during *Makar Sankranti* with great pomp and show, it had some special songs also associated with

its rituals. These songs were sung by the girls only. One of such songs sung by the girls with local Bengali tunes was, as follows:

"Tushala, Kantushala, Tushala go Rai;  
Tomar daulate amra chhabri -pitha Khai  
Chhabri, Labri, gangae, sinane Jai  
Gangar Jale rundhi bari pukhorer jal khai  
Oh Tushala, Tushala go.

The meaning of this song is as follows :

"O Tushala, the deary, through your grace  
do we have joy of Chabri cakes  
We take the ingredients to the river side,  
And have our bath in the river,  
Our cooking with its water and our  
Drinks out of the (adjacent) tank.

But the most important period of the celebration was the last night, when parting songs of separation were sung. A very popular song was-

"Tiris dine Puj lam Ma ke  
Tiris sal ta diya go,  
Ar Ma ke laram Rakhte  
Makar nichen lite go".

(we worshipped mother (Tushu) for thirty days, by offering thirty new wicks, Alas : the makar has come to take her away and we can not keep her any longer)<sup>109</sup>.

### **Bhadu Songs**

Bhadu Songs were sung on the occasion of Bhadu Parab. Every village had generally one puja where all girls of the village assembled and sang the songs. The following lines of a songs in the local Bengali dialect explained the importance of the festivals

"Toder ghare Bhadu Ache,  
Tai Kar anajana  
Jakhan Bhadu Chole Jabe"  
Kar Sukhe duyar mana."

(Oh know why I came to your house, because Bhadu IS here, shut the door, when she goes away).

And another song was as follows:—

“Har Sadher Bhaduke Kemone dibogo  
Chhere moder prane manena  
Chher dite tare Paran Kanke hare  
Tave ki kare  
Rakhite Pari tar upai bolona  
Hiyar Majhare, rakhite tave, hare,  
Jiban thakite  
dibonajete ai moner basona”

“Oh! how my hearts breaks, for how shall I bid good bye to our dear bhadu. Tears came to my eyes at the thought of separation”

Oh! tell us the means of having her in our midst: I shall keep her en- shrined in my heart

Oh that I could with my life, stop here going away”<sup>110</sup>.

The Bhumijis of this area were also very fond of dances and songs specially on the occasion of marriage. Dancing was almost always accompanied by singing and they had a special set of marriage songs. Here is a specimen :

“Hacre hai seingal jutana bar konare  
O kanate ombre sengel enegoaiya  
Duku kajiokoy patecyaye  
Enga apu orate Shenojan haya haya  
goejando okoi sango okai shenoya”

The fire fed with husks of paddy is burning with redoubled force, how is it to be quenched. To whom shall I tell my sorrow and who will believe it. Going from the parents house, even, I weep. Does sorrow accompany even after death<sup>111</sup>.

The Bhuiyans also used to sing songs. Whenever the young men of the village went to the darbar ( dancing-ground) and beat the drums, the young girls joined them there and spent their evening dancing and singing and enjoying themselves. Here is the translation of a song sung by the Bhuiyan girls and boys one after the other.

Boys

A kanchan flower brings to us, we'll listen whilst you sing to us. Girls  
We'll gather greens for dinner, dear. But cannot think of singing here

**Boys**

As Radha's pretty little bird, you sweetly sing and must be heard.

**Girls**

You silken meshes, us fling. But truly love: we cannot sing.

**Boys**

A handful that of chaff and straw as boys you surely beat at jaw.

**Girls**

Ah: birds that chirp and flyaway with us you care not then to stay ?

**Boys**

Yes, Yes, we have caught some pretty fish, to part, dear girls, is not our wish.

**Girls**

The clouds disperse, the day looks fair, come back then lads our homes to share.

**Boys**

No, by the bar tree blossom but you come with us and share our hut.

**Girls**

The birds sing merrily, we agree, to leave pa ma and go with them.

When the song ended the girls went down on their knee, and bowing to their ground respectfully saluted the youngmen, who gravely and formally returned the compliment, and they parted. In the dance, the boys rounded in a circle, beating drums and singing, and women danced opposite to them with their heads covered and bodies much inclined, touching each other's shoulders in line<sup>112</sup>.

The Hos were also very fond of dancing and music. During Mage festival which was the season for love. It was no wonder that people awaited the return of the festival every year and composed songs to express their feeling:—

"Maghe Setera bareng

Chetane latane disume ley Mage setera

Baijom-me bareng

Dama, dumang, rutu, banam, baijom-me

Nimir gapa hai ta-re

Mage setere lan re esu ransaa  
 Ena men long Kajiam lina  
 Nimir gapa bareng baijomme.

(O : dear brother, Mage is on its course, get ready with drum, fluts and sarangi. O : what a pleasure is getting ready for Mage, brother dear, get ready, with your music).

The Hos used different kinds of musical instruments. Drums and stringed and wind instruments were equally prevalent. The drum was known as "Dumang". One form of stringed instrument was a kind of violin called "Banam". Similarly the flutes were called 'Ruw'. The group dance was the most favourite amusement of the Hos. Each occasion had its typical rhythm and movement. In some of the dances, e.g. Maghe dance or marriage dance, boys and girls joined together - a boy and a girl standing alternatively anti-clock-wise and clock-wise. At the centre of the dancers stood youngmen with drums and violin (Banum) and flutes (ruw). Dancers followed the beat of drums, sometimes dances were accompanied by songs but very often the dance only took the lead from a song. The Maghe dance had particularly fast and amorous movements. In the dance only women stood in the circle while boys participated merely as musicians. One thing to be noted here is that in dance the discipline of the youth was mostly manifest. Boys and girls who infringed the rules of tribal etiquette or defied the order of the seniors were not allowed to take part in dances<sup>113</sup>.

### Chau Dances

The most striking thing about the cultural life of Seraikella and Kharsawan was the Chhau dance. Both these States were famous for this dance not only in the region but in whole India. There was a very old saying - "Kharsawara Jauraghata, Brahmani-ghatra pata, Kerara Kalika ghata and Sadhaikelia nata". The meaning is that "the Jauraghata of Kharsawan, the pot of Bamanghati, the Kalikaghats of Kera and the Chhau dance of Seraikella are famous."

This was the tract of land from which the famous Chhau dance had originated and spread to other parts of Bihar, west Bengal and Orissa<sup>114</sup>. Regarding the origin of this Chhau dance it is said that the dance originated from the military camp of the Porahat Raj. There is a story that about the year 1590 during the reign of Raja Ranjit Singh of Porahat, Raja Mansingh, the General of Akbar the Great, stayed in Porahat on his way to Bengal. During his stay, the Mughal soldiers

enjoyed themselves taking part in the different tribal dances of the region. They were so charmed to see these dances that they organised a dance programme for themselves. By nature a soldier wielding the sword was not temperamentally suited to dance in a feminine style. Due to this hesitation, they used a mask and then danced. Generally during the early period, it was a sword dance. After the departure of the Mughal soldiers the Rulers of the Porahat State developed this art of mask dancing and later on it came to be known as Chhau dance of this region<sup>115</sup>. Based on the principles of Bharata's *Natya Shastra* it had assimilated into itself the Orissan style of dancing and to some extent the folk dances of numerous tribes that inhabited the region<sup>116</sup>. This unique dance has rightly been compared with the other classical dances of India, such as Kathakali, Kathak, Bharat Natyam, Manipuri and Garba of Gujarat<sup>117</sup>.

Generally in every fair and on other festive occasions this dance was staged but the spring festival or Chait Parab was the occasion when famous Chhau dance was performed with great enthusiasm. It was the festival held in honour of lord Shiva. The peculiar thing about this dance was that all the dancers covered their faces with masks beautifully made and in strict accordance with their character portrayal. The mask was an essential element of the dance. The choreography of the dance composition was such that one had to express all the moods, The 'Rasas' through the limbs alone. If the mask was discarded, the whole technique will undergo vast changes and it may fall through. On the other hand, the mask were used in this art to conceal the identity of the dancers. Another thing was that only male members participated in this dance, women were strictly barred from joining these dances<sup>118</sup>. Most of the items were derived from Hindu mythology. But some of the items represented the daily life of the different kinds of people and some items were related with nature. Some of the items were as follows: - (1) Ardha Nariswar (The composite form of shiva and shakti), (2) Radha Krishna (3) Tandava (Shiva 's Tandava dance), (4) Kalia Daman (subjugation of the serpent Kalia by Krishna), (5) Eklavya, (6) Chandra Bhaga (7) Arti, (8) Dhechar (Fisherman), (9) Nabik (Boatman) (10) Sabar (Hunter), (11) Sagar Nritya (lure of the sea) and Mayur Nritya (Peacock dance). Besides these there were several other items also. In these dances mostly Mridang (a type of drum), Vanshi (flute) Shahnai (wind instrument), Kartal (a huge pair of metal cymbals), Jhang (similar to kartal) Dombaru (small drum), Dhak (big drum) Dhol (drum) and Nagara (Drum) were used as musical instruments. Sometimes Sitar and



Sarod formed a musical choir to lend support to a dancers. The musical instruments were used according to the need of the dance<sup>119</sup>.

The dance was so famous that it was staged at many places in India and outside. After seeing this dance in 1937 Srimati Sarojini Naidu, the famous poet and nationalist leader of India was so deeply impressed that she spoke to Mahatma Gandhi and insisted that he must see it. In 1937, the Chhau dancers of Seraikella gave a command performance before Gandhiji in the residence of Sri Sarat Chandra Bose at Calcutta where Mahatma Gandhi was staying. On other occasion this dance was performed at Shanti Niketan and profoundly impressed Rabindar Nath Tagore. In March 1947, a special show was presented in the York Road residence of the 'late prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru for distinguished guests of the Asian Relations Conference. These dancers performed in European Countries also. In 1938, Prince Shuvendra Narayan Singhdeo led a team of Chhau dancers to the European countries. During this tour he presented this dance in Great Britain and Italy also<sup>120</sup>. The ruling family always took keen interest in this art. Some of the princes were participated in this dance and were really very good dancers, especially Rajkumar Shuvendra Narayan Singh Deo and Rajkumar Brojendra Narayan Singh Deo of Seraikella<sup>121</sup>.

### Education

There is hardly any record to present a clear picture of education in this region before the advent of the British. It can be well guessed that before the coming of the British there was hardly much of what one understands by education today. The general masses had no written language of their own. They had little interest in education and the Rajas were not interesting in imparting education to them. Though there is a lack of information about the education system in the early period, we have some references to show that the early records of the States were written in Oriya language. The "Vamsa Prabha Lekhna" (official chronicles), the records of the Sri Ma I Paudi temple, the land or village grants made on Talpatra (palm-leaf) and Mandalas (official records) were kept in the Oriya language<sup>122</sup>.

This shows that the Oriya language was the common language of the region and there must have been some arrangement for imparting this language to the people. Further, we find that when the Hos of Singhbhum (including those of Seraikella and Kharswan) were compelled to enter into an agreement with the British in 1821, it was enjoined that they would encourage their children to learn either Oriya or Hindi language<sup>123</sup>.

This marked the beginning of formal education among a people who had previously no tradition of education in the modern sense of the term.

During the early decades of the last century education was seemingly limited to the families of the Rulers, Courtiers, Brahmins, priests and to some extent the Munlās and Munkīs (heads of the villages) only. There are evidences to show that during the early period there were some indigenous Pathshalas where people received education. Even in the early 20th century some Pathshalas were functioning side by side with the middle and primary schools. Not only that there were Sanskrit Tols also in both the States where students learnt Sanskrit<sup>124</sup>.

Modern education began to be imparted after the advent of the British in this region. In 1841, the first Anglo-Hindi school was started at Chaibasa, but it had to close down in 1851. Instead Bengali medium schools were started at Chaibasa, Jaitgarh, Ghatshilla, Chiru and Seraikella. At whose suggestion the Government started these schools is not known, but it was clearly a mistake. In Seraikella and Kharsawan there were few Bengali families and the Principle Assistant reported to the Government in 1853 that the Bengali medium schools in Seraikella and Kharsawan did not attract many students. The Chiefs and the people wanted that Hindi should be taught in the schools instead of Bengali. H. Ricketts, Member of the Board of Revenue, visited Singhbhum and recommended Hindi medium schools at Seraikella<sup>125</sup>.

No further information regarding the progress of education in this region is available till 1870-71. That year, we find one model school functioning at Seraikella and Kharsawan each. The total number of students in both the schools was eighty-one only<sup>126</sup>. But subsequently the number of schools as well as scholars increased. In 1901 there were 24 schools attended by 572 students at Seraikella while in Kharsawan the number of schools was nine and the students numbered three hundred eighty only. In 1906-07, the number of schools at Kharsawan rose to 23 and the number of students to 352, while in Seraikella in 1907-08, the number of schools rose to 30 and the students to 1131. In the year 1908 in Seraikella town there were one middle school and one primary school while in Kharsawan there was one middle school. Rest of the schools were scattered in other areas of this region.

The school at the headquarters of both the states were maintained by the States and remaining schools of the region received grant-in-aid and some of them were maintained by private persons. The number of schools and students increased further and in 1946-47 there were one

middle school, five upper primary schools and fourteen lower primary schools and one thousand one hundred forty nine students in Kharsawan State<sup>127</sup>. In Seraikella State in the year 1945-46, there were one high school, three middle schools, six upper primary schools, seventy eight lower primary schools and the total number of students was three thousand three hundred only<sup>128</sup>.

Education was imparted to all irrespective of caste or creed. There was no separate school for the so-called low-caste people. Every student, whether aboriginal or depressed got education from these schools<sup>129</sup>. There were two boys hostels for aboriginal students in Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>130</sup>. In schools these students not only learnt their subjects but also played football, hockey, badminton and volleyball etc. The students received scout-training and participated in scouting camps. Some of the schools maintained their libraries also<sup>131</sup>. In the primary schools education was imparted free in the two classes at the bottom and nominal fees were realized in other classes. Free-studentship was allowed in all deserving cases. To encourage female-education all the girls received education free of charge in all the institutions of the two states<sup>132</sup>. The teachers in these institutions were trained and qualified<sup>133</sup>. Generally students appeared at the Matriculation Examination either from Patna University or Utkal University. Records shows that between 1938 and 1941 twentyfour students appeared from Patna University and most of them came out successful. Between 1941-46, sixty-one students appeared from Utkal university and 53 proved successful<sup>134</sup>.

After independence these states merged with Bihar and education became the responsibility of the Government of Bihar. The Government evinced keen interest in the field and by the year 1951 there were no less than 171 Day Schools, 100 Night Schools besides a training school. The number of M.E. and U.P. schools just doubled after the merger. The two High Schools at Seraikella and Kharsawan came to be managed directly by the Government of Bihar. The school buildings were thoroughly repaired and the efficiency of the staff improved. Special care was taken to help the spread of education among the tribals by awarding them stipends and scholarships and providing accomodation for them in hostels. A sum of no less than Rs. 50,000 was spent on scholarship and stipends to aboriginal students during the years 1948-1951. Besides tribal students others also received scholarship or stipends from the Government. The M.E schools for girls at Scaikella which was not functioning for sometime was reyled after the merger and the number of students rose to 100 in the year similarly the U.P. Girls schools at

Kharsawan was raised to the middle school standard after merger. The students had the choice to learn Hindi or Oriya according to their will<sup>135</sup>.

The system of inspection and superintendence of educational institutions had already been introduced by the Rulers of these States. The Education Department of Seraikella State controlled schools within its jurisdiction. There were some Sub-Inspectors of schools who visited the schools from time to time<sup>136</sup>. In Kharsawan State also there was an Education Department which controlled the schools and the education officer was called the Education Advisor. Under him there were some Schools Inspectors. After merger educational institutions came under the control and supervision of the District Superintendent of Education whose headquarter was at Chaibasa. Under him there were two Deputy Superintendents of Education; one stationed at Chaibasa and the other at Seraikella<sup>137</sup>.

### **Economic Life**

During the period under review, agriculture was the main occupation of the people of this region. Besides this, there were some mining activities and other small manufacturing agencies which provided employment to some of the people of the area. When the area was in the process of development and roads and communication facilities were coming up, trade and commerce also developed. With this, people not only got livelihood from business, but the area also expanded commercially. This led to a change in the economic condition of the people.

### **Agriculture**

Generally the tribals of the area were not good cultivators. They were men of very primitive instincts, mostly hunters who depended for their food on roots, fruits and herbs which were easily available in the jungles. But due to economic hardship and contacts with the non-tribal, like the Gowalas and frumis etc. they were also forced to take to agriculture<sup>138</sup>. The Kurmis and Gowalas or Pradhans were the best cultivators in this area. Next came the Santhals. The Hos improved their cultivation following the example set to them by these people<sup>139</sup>. Their cultivation took two forms, namely (I) Purunga or Jhuming proper for lands on the upper and steeper slopes of the hills and (II) Gora or dry cultivation of the lower slopes or levels lands in the valley and seldom far removed from the village sites. These two differed in many respects and also in their results. In 'Jhuming' cultivation a patch of forest was cleared and one or two crops were raised. After getting one or two crops the cultivators moved on to another area and the process

was repealed. The 'Gora' cultivation, on the other hand, was a kind of some permanent cultivation and was usually practised on gently sloping land or in the valleys where the soil was deep. Here the practice was to fell tree felled trees in the forest first in the burn it and the ashes with the soil. The area was then brought under cultivation<sup>140</sup>.

There were five classes of land generally recognised viz., bera, nali, don, gora and bari of which the first three grew rice. 'Bera lands' were embanked lands situated at the bottom of depressions, which were irrigated artificially or from natural stream and yielded a good crop of winter rice, 'Nali' lands were those situated on the slopes, which received a certain amount of irrigation from springs and natural sources. Don lands were embanked rice land on higher levels, 'Gora' were unbanked uplands, and 'Bari', homestead lands<sup>141</sup>.

The chief crop, rice, was grown on embanked lands. The peasants utilised all their energies to its cultivation and the other crops were merely supplementary ones. Generally three crops of rice were grown during the year. One was in the month of Bhado, the second in Kartik and the third in Aghan. The Bhadaï and autumn types of paddy were sown in June and reaped towards the close of October or November. These crops were either sown, broadcasted or transplanted. Kartik or winter paddy crop was sown in nursery early in July and was transplanted in 'bera' lands and reaped in December, 'Aghan' paddy was sown in first class lands and harvested in Aghan<sup>142</sup>.

The crops after being gathered were taken to open threshing floors or barns which were well cleaned and plastered with cow dung. There were two modes of threshing, one by beating out grain by the feet and other by having it trodden over by bullocks. As the straw was much broken in the process of threshing, it was ill-adapted for the purpose of thatching and was used chiefly as fodder. The grains when threshed out, were stored in large granaries made of twisted straw-rope, locally termed 'Pura' which were kept on a roughly made wooden platform. Within the dwelling houses the 'Dhenkis' (the country thrashing apparatus), so common in other parts of the area, were not much in use among the Hos. Their ordinary method of husking rice was putting the paddy into a hollow made in the ground and crushing it with a wooden pounding material worked by hand<sup>143</sup>. Of other cereals the most important was maize or Indian corn, which was commonly cultivated on uplands near the home-steads. Next was Maria (*Eleusine coracana*), barley took the third place and it was grown to a considerable extent, but wheat was raised only over a small area, chiefly on the lands after the rice crop had

been reaped. A considerable variety of millets was cultivated, such as Gundli (*Panicum milliactum*) grown on uplands, Jowar or Gangar (*Sorghum vulgare*) grain was grown on hill sides which had been 'Jhumed' and on level 'gora' lands. The spiked millet called Bajra (*Pennisetum typhoidum*) and Kotto (a rough type of millet) were grown. The more important pulses were gram, Kurthi (*Dolichos biflorus*), und (*Phaseolus mungo*) and Rahar (*Cajanus cajan*). Grams like Khesari and masur were grown on rice lands after the paddy crops were reaped and the other pulses were grown on the elevated gora lands<sup>144</sup>.

The principal oil seeds were 'rapeseeds', 'Mustard', 'keel' or '*Sesamum*', tisi or linseed and sarguja or sunflower (*verbesina sativa*). Linseed was grown on rice lands as well as on 'Gora' lands and the other on 'gora' lands only. Other crops like tobacco, cotton and sugar-cane were grown to a very limited extent. Tobacco was grown generally on 'Kudar' or river-ine lands and on small plots near the homestead, where the soil was well manured. Two kinds of tobacco were cultivated, one had large leaf and the other a small leaf which was about half the size of the former one. The crop was grown entirely for home consumption. It was sown in seed-beds in October, the seedlings being transplanted in December and the crops gathered in March. Cotton was particularly the only fibre crop grown but the quantity of land under jute was very much limited. Sugarcane was grown on only a small area. The fields chosen were situated near the tanks and rivers, as the crops required repeated irrigation<sup>145</sup>. Vegetables like cauliflowers, cabbage, tomato, radish, carrot and beet were some of the new vegetables introduced by the non tribals. Chandil had 500 acres of land under vegetables cultivation. Vegetables like bottle-gourd, lady's finger (maia) and cauliflower etc. found a ready market at Tatanagar<sup>146</sup>.

The people of the area in many places did not manure the wet cultivation at all. They depended on the silt contained in the jungle waters. Generally the cultivators used cow dung and oil cake for manuring purposes in their fields. Sometime weeds, dried leaves and twigs were burnt and the ashes were used as manure. With the efforts and encouragement of the Agricultural Department the cultivators were slowly taking to making the proper compost for manuring purposes. Usually a mixture of cow dung, ashes, leaves and refuse collected from the house hold was used as compose<sup>147</sup>. After independence the agriculture Depots at Gamharia in Seraikella Sub Division made chemical fertilizers available. The use of bone meal, ammonium sulphate, ammonium nitrate and super phosphate was slowly coming into vogue.



The cultivators usually kept a stock of seeds sufficient to meet their requirements. The methods of storing seeds were indigenous and could not always guarantee proper germination. If the harvest was not sufficient seeds could not be stored. After the merger of these States with Bihar, the Agriculture Department of Singhbhum maintained three depots at the sub divisional headquarters at Jamshedpur, Chailbasa and Seraikella from where seeds were sold<sup>148</sup>.

## IRRIGATION

The rivers and streams of the area were hilly in character and were not much used for irrigation. They could only be used if their waters were stored, for further use. The sources of water supply for irrigation were springs, tanks and wells, etc. The usual method of irrigation was that the construction of embankments built across drainage line of streams, so as to form small reservoirs with a good catchment area. The surplus water was allowed to escape by means of a drain, and the lands below them were kept moist by natural water percolation. When rainfall was scanty, the embankment was cut at places and water was allowed to run into the fields where the crops were languishing for want of sufficient water. Wells were not used for irrigation and were conspicuous by their absence. The wells were too much scattered and few over these States to serve as irrigation channel. Springs or 'Pains' were numerous, but no attempt was made to use water for any other but drinking purposes. The rivers were scarcely used for irrigation for they dried up in summer and during the rains were in torrents and too boisterous to be used for irrigation. However, if there was any water in the depth of the river bed in the hot weather, the raiyats used the water for their sugarcane crop by raising it by means of a rope and bucket. In the settlement of 1904-1907, there were 614 tanks or bandhs in both the States<sup>149</sup>. In the latest settlement of Seraikella in 1925-28, the number of tanks and bandhs was 1625<sup>150</sup> and in Kharswan in the year 1925-27, the number was only 514<sup>151</sup>. But since 1948, i.e. after merger of these two States with Bihar there was a concerted minor irrigation drive as apart of the Grow More Food campaign. The object of the drive was to repair the existing small irrigation works and to pursue new schemes to provide irrigation. According to this scheme in 1948-49, a sum of Rs. 2 lakh was spent on the construction of minor irrigation works and 62 such schemes were completed. In 1950-51, again 59 such schemes were executed upto July<sup>152</sup>. In the year 1956, Bihar Government took up the Sona irrigation schemes on Sona river of the Seraikella Sub division. On this

scheme the Government proposed to spend Rs 4 lakhs. The scheme was expected to irrigate about 2,200 acres of land<sup>153</sup>.

### Live Stock

The principal domestic animals were buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs and ponies. Buffaloes, oxen and cows were employed for agriculture, but the tribals made no distinction between a buffalo and a cow for ploughing purpose, and it was quite a common thing to see two cows or a bullock and a cow yoked together. Sheep and goats were kept on a large scale in the area. These animals were valuable assets as they produced wool and skins and in the case of goats, also milk<sup>154</sup>. The Hos earlier reared pigs and ate pork but due to the influence of the Hindu neighbours, they also gave up pork eating<sup>155</sup>. Ponies were used by the rich and ruling families for riding purposes only<sup>156</sup>.

There were some pony carriages meant for carrying people. Generally rulers and some rich people maintained such carriages<sup>157</sup>. But the quality of cattle was, on the whole, poor. Pasturage was generally ample for there were wide stretches of jungle and hilly tracts, and there was usually enough rain at intervals throughout the year to keep the grass and other vegetation fairly green. In addition to the grass in the jungles and on the waste lands, cattle got pasturage in the rice fields wherein few second crops were grown<sup>158</sup>.

### FAMINES

Seraikella and Kharsawan were prone to drought caused by deficiency in rainfall. There had not, however, been a serious famine since 1866, chiefly because the majority of the population was aboriginal, considerable part of whose food supply consisted of edible forest products. With these they supplemented their ordinary diet, and in time of scarcity they could subsist on them without great sufferings. The most important of these products was the flower of the Mahua tree, especially in the jungle villages, where for weeks together the poorer classes of the Hos fed on it, and on the wild fruit-roots and leaves which they gathered in the jungles<sup>159</sup>.

The famine of 1866 was felt throughout the region. During this year famine but cholera also spread Seraikella and the surrounding villages. People died of hunger and disease<sup>160</sup>. The price of rice had risen to Rs. 1 for 5 seers. Only rich people could afford to take rice while the poor depended on jungle fruits<sup>161</sup>. In July, when the famine was at its height, Dr. Hayes, Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum,

opened four centers for reliefwork. Soon after the Raja of Seraikella and the Thakur of Kharsawan also opened relief centers at their own expenses, so that in September, 1866, seven centers were in operation in the most distressed tracts at distance of 30 Kms. apart<sup>162</sup>. Rev. Paul Struve, a Lutheran missionary of Chaibasa, started a relief centre in his mission at Seraikella. During this crisis he distributed medicine, rice and food to the affected people. But he himself became affected with cholera and his condition became so serious that he was brought to Chaibasa. The attack was so severe that it claimed the life of this kind hearted missionary<sup>163</sup>. Relief was also afforded in the shape of employment on public works. A special grant of Rs. 4000 was made for the construction and repair of roads. During the famine a portion of the Barakar-Chaibasa road which passed through Seraikella was repaired. The daily wages paid to the men varied from 5 to 7 pice a day, according to the price of grain<sup>164</sup>. The famine of 1915-16 also to some extent affected the Asantalin Pir of Kharsawan and the Chiru and Chera villages of Seraikella. But this was not so much acute as that of 1866<sup>165</sup>.

### **Trade and Industry**

Most of the inhabitants were dependent on agriculture and the industries of the two States were of little economic importance. However there were some small manufacturing activities connected with cotton, lusser, gold and bell-metal etc. Cups iron ploughshares, axes, spades, shovels, knives etc. and locks were manu-ed but all these products, as a rule, merely met the local demands<sup>166</sup>. The of Tantis of Weavers) worked as weaver and prepared clothes for the people. The 'Lohar' made useful wares and tools like ploughshares, sickles, arrow heads, hoe-blades, picks and battle-axes etc. The 'Kurnhar' (potter) made the cooking pots<sup>167</sup>. Besides these, the villagers manufactured other things also such as nail or wooden materials of the plough, the anr (yoke), the hisidanga (connecting rod), the Karba (plough handle) atagom (harrow) and the wooden frame of the earth remover (Karn or mai). Of their utensils, the earthen disks (matia), the earthen vessels and pots (Tundi, chelang, chatu, dachatu and Chukka) were made by the Kurnhars. Such articles as the iron vegetable-cutter (Thenga -Kathi, bainthi) and iron spoons or ladles (Medlandi) were supplied by the blacksmith<sup>168</sup>. Oil was manufac- tured in almost every village of the tribals. It was obtained from the seeds of the Kusum tree, fruits of Mahua and the seed of the Karanj. The former was used in cooking, the last two for anointing the body. Oil was produced for local consumption only<sup>169</sup>. Bamboo-groves were planted by the

villagers near the villages and used for building and fencing purposes. Bamboo was also used for making mats, baskets and other household articles. Similarly the 'Sabai' grass, found in the jungle, largely used by the people for making rope, brooms and other types of tools<sup>170</sup>.

The area was industrially not so developed, yet there were some small industries such as tu-ser, lac, and loznce making etc. There were some mines also. Kynrie was an important mineral of the area. In the year 1942, a glass factory was started at Kandra in Seraikella state.

Tussar industry was one of the oldest cottage industries of the region. Cocoons were reared by the weavers themselves. Thread was gathered on 'latias'. Cloth was woven on the ordinary handloom. It was of yellow colour and was made to measure of 5 x 1 ms., i.e. size of a 'dohli' or sari<sup>171</sup>.

Cloth weaving by indigenous method was carried on in both Seraikella and Kharsawan. In the villages 'Tantis' worked as weavers while in the towns of Seraikella and Kharsawan, there was another class of weavers called Patras, who prepared cloth from tussar cocoons. But they were very few in number. Tussar cloth was manufactured at Raghunathpur in Seraikella<sup>172</sup>. As the products were rather coarse, they were consumed by the tribal population of the area. Later on due to keen competition from foreign manufacturers this indigenous cotton industry gradually decayed<sup>173</sup>. But the Tussar silk cloth of Seraikella was so famous that it was exported to Dacca and other parts of lower Bengal<sup>174</sup>.

Seraikella Glass Works Ltd. at Kandra, about 30 K.M. north from Seraikella town was established in 1942 and it manufactured glass sheets. It employed about 750 workers at that time. The machines were run by electricity generated inside the factory. Its monthly production capacity was 24,00,000 square feet of glass sheets.

Ceramic works were first started in 1943 in village Karanjia in Raj Kharsawan. The factory manufactured crockery and electrical goods both by jiggering and moulding processes, but could not stand competition with foreign products, particularly from Japan. The concern could not get required China clay and gypsum to improve its products. The factory was finally closed in 1948<sup>175</sup>.

Bidi (indigenous cigarettes) making was one of the principal cottage industries of this area. The forests grew Kendu trees abundantly. Craft-paper, tissue papers, ordinary label papers, tobacco leaves and yam etc. required for the manufacture of bidi were easily available. Karakela became the centre of this industry<sup>176</sup>.

Timber and wood-working industry also flourished. The forests of Seraikella and Kharsawan had fine trees of Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Asan (*Terminalia Tomentosa*), Gamhar (*Gmelina arborea*), Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*), Pipal Kend (*Diosyros melanoxylon*) and Jamun (*Engenia jambolana*). Useful timber naturally helped the growth of this industry, the important centers being Kandra and Raj Kharaswan<sup>177</sup>.

The Seraikella state was famous for different kinds of ornaments made of gold and silver. Brass and bell-metal works were also popular in the region. Ornaments and brass-works were made by braziers known as Khadras in the area. The demand of these ornaments was increasing and the Khadras found in this job more profitable than the brass-works<sup>178</sup>.

Among other small scale industries mention may be made of lac, pottery, lozenges and wooden comb, etc. A considerable quantity of lac and shellack was manufactured at Chandi<sup>179</sup>. The pottery of Kharaswan enjoyed a good reputation<sup>180</sup>. One small lozenge factory was established at Sini<sup>181</sup>. Slabs of rocks, locally called makrai, were found in some parts of the State of Seraikella. They were used for building purposes<sup>182</sup>. Wooden combs of local manufacture at Kharaswan were very popular among the people of the area<sup>183</sup>.

### Mines

Copper was one of the important minerals of the area since ancient times. The existence of copper in the area was made known first in 1847 by Captain J.C. Haughton, Asstt. to the Governor General's agent in the south west Frontier. The location was a hill near Narayanpur in Seraikella which was called Tambadungri by the local people. Excavation here showed that during ancient period it was an important centre of copper mining. The copper belt passed through Kharsawan, Seraikella and Dhalbhum. The first Singhbhum Copper Company was formed in 1857. About 1200 to 1300 Cwts of copper ore was produced monthly from the mines of Mandup (Dhalbhum) and Jamjora in Seraikella. As the area of the mines belonged to the Rajas of Seraikella and Dhalbhum, the company had to pay these Rulers Rs. 9200 yearly. But this was too heavy for the Company. Thus due to heavy expense and high royalties paid to these two Rulers the Company went into liquidation in 1859<sup>184</sup>. In the year 1867-1868 the famous Geogist visited Manbhum and Singhbhum. During his journey he visited Seraikella, Kharsawan, Kandra, Chandl and Govindpur. He visited ancient copper mines of Seraikella and gathered information about the miners also<sup>185</sup>. Similarly in the year 1905-06 and 1906-07 K.A K. Hallows was deputed by the

Geological Survey of India to make a survey of the Copper belt. In his survey he found copper at 'c; Kadmadih, North of present Rajkharwan station and Regadih (Galudih) 8 kms. West of Kadmadih. Although the Kadmadih borings were undertaken by G S I, they did not give very encouraging results. Thus though this area due to heavy expenditure involved, the work was stopped<sup>186</sup>

Along the northern side of the copper mines, Kyanite occurred in a belt about 80 miles long stretching east from the western side of Kerakella to Dhalbhum through northern side of Kharsawan and Seraikella. The Lapso Burn deposits of Kyanite in Kharsawan were one of the largest deposits in the world and were estimated to contain over 30,00,000 tonnes. Apart from Lapso Burn deposits, small deposits were located in the villages of Lepia, Karkatta and Kera in Kharsawan. Other small deposits were at Jhargobinder in Seraikella, Badai in Kerakella and Sarengda near Sini<sup>187</sup>

The Indian Copper Corporation Ltd owned the mines at Lapso Burn in Kharsawan. The material was exported in a raw state after washing and dressing to all parts of the world including the United States, U K., Belgium, France, Australia and Sweden<sup>188</sup>

Asbestos was found at several places in Seraikella. The largest deposits were at Barabana and Rajnagar. Besides these Sarangposhi, Bana, Patka, Maharajganj and Chaliama mines were also worked. The total output was 126 tonnes in 1945-46. The supply was mainly made to M/S Tata Iron & Steel Company Ltd Jamshedpur and a few customers at Calcutta. Owing to difficulties of wagon supply a fairly large amount of dust quality asbestos could not be disposed<sup>189</sup>.

### Pot Stone

Pot Stone was found at Arabanga to the north of Kharswan, Dubrajpur in Seraikella and Karakela. About the pot stone, Captain Houghton, Asstt. to Governor General's Agent, wrote that pot stone was worked out at many places. Some specimens appeared almost identical with the French chalk. The stone of Dubrajpur in Seraikella was of this variety and other stone approached the English stone in texture. Some abounded in iron pyrites, as the pot stone of Karakella. Occasionally the rock appeared to contain much silex, as at Arbanga in Kharsawan<sup>190</sup>

China clay was found in some places of Seraikella and Kharsawan. Some of the deposits were at Chagi, Chapra, Bharatpur and Rangamua in the Seraikella State<sup>191</sup>. Upto 1925, the China clay mines were under the direct management of the states and clay was sold through the



agnets<sup>192</sup> But later on it was given to M/S Ganesh Lal Brijhi Chand who worked out China Clay mines at Kuludih and raised 715 tonnes of the material in 1945-46. N Singh Dao worked the other mines and raised 22 tonnes of the mineral in the same year<sup>193</sup>

Silica was found at Sanjay in Seraikella. M/S Tata Iron & Steel Company Ltd Jamshedpur were given lease and worked the mines at Sanjay and raised 5,550 tonnes during the year 1945<sup>194</sup>

Alluvial gold had been washed from alluvium and sand from the rivers Sona and Sanjay<sup>195</sup> The Sonapet valley at Sona river contained abundant quartz veins and gold was worked here in the past in about 1888. The ruins of the ancient mine buildings may still be seen overgrown with jungle<sup>196</sup> Generally the gold washing operations were carried on mainly during the rains, when water was abundant and was exercising a certain amount of concentrating force in the stream beds. The washers concerned themselves only with the gold at or near the surface. The actual operation were performed mainly by persons known as Jhoras. In some places, the women alone washed, such labour being considered beneath the dignity of men. Besides this alluvium gold, the gold veins (quartz veins) were also found in this region. There was also a belt along the southern border of Dhalbhum from Kendarkocha west wards into Seraikella. Another belt was east from Narayanpur in Seraikella to Matku. In Iowa and other places in Patkum Estate, gold was found in association with copper. In Ichagarh gold bearing veins were worked by the Gold Reef Mining Syndicate till the periods under review<sup>197</sup>

Besides, there were lime-stone, iron, slate, mica and galena ore deposits of found in this region but these ores do not appear to have been rich<sup>198</sup>. Similarly soap stone was also found in Seraikella, Chahdil and Karaikella<sup>199</sup>.

### **Trade**

Both these States were predominantly agricultural and hence the principal articles of export were agricultural products. These were rice, pulses, stick lac, oil seeds, ropes and Sahai grass etc. The jungle produce like timber, kendu leaves, lac and horns etc. were also exported. Besides these, silver ware, gold ornaments, brass and brass utensils, glass and mineral were also exported<sup>200</sup>

The mineral which was exported outside the country was Kyanite. As the Kyanite deposit of Kharsawan was of an excellent quality it was exported outside India. In the year 1945-46, the State of Seraikella exported, 1,172 tonnes of Kyanite to the U S A<sup>201</sup> Similarly in the year

1946-47, the Kharsawan State mines exported 10,260 tonnes Kyanite to the United State and Great Britain<sup>202</sup>. Seraikella Glass Factory at Kandra supplied 14,86,000 sq.ft. of glass sheet to the Defence Department of the Government of India during the Second World War<sup>203</sup>.

Kendu leaves from the Kandrajungles within the State of Seraikella had a widespread reputation and they were sent in large quantities to the tobacco and bidi factories of Hyderabad, Cutch, Central provinces and Calcutta. Seraikella supplied a variety of medicinal herbs, roots, resins and gum etc. Similarly the brass and bell-metal industries were quite famous. Locally manufactured brass utensils and ornaments of gold and silver were exported outside the states<sup>204</sup>. Tassar clothes of Seraikella were so famous that they were exported to Dacca and other parts of lower Bengal, though this trade was only a small one<sup>205</sup>.

The chief imports of these state were salts, sugar, kerosene oil, tobacco, manufactured cotton goods, ghee, pulses, spices-rass, wheat, bell-metal) and utensils<sup>206</sup>. These were generally procured from the neighboring districts and other places in India. Salts and sugar were imported from Orissa<sup>207</sup>. Important trading centres within these two State were Chandil, Amda, Sini and the capital towns of Seraikella and Kharsawan. Chandil, a railway-junction on the Tata-Adra line, was an important place for lac and Shellac business<sup>208</sup>. Similarly Kandra, Sini and Amda being Railway stations were important trading centers. Kandra became an industrial township due to the establishment of the Seraikella Glass works. Amda Railway Station (whose name was changed to Raj Kharswan) was an important railway junction on the Howrah-Nagpur line. It became an important centre of export for timber, sal-sleepers and Kyanite. Gamharia station was also an important centre for exporting rice and lad<sup>209</sup>. Similarly Sini, the nearest railway station for Seraikella was an important trading centre. The importance of this place-increased due to the Railway workshop which employed nearly 500 workers and the Railway Training School which trained the signallers and guards etc<sup>210</sup>.

The Hats (weekly market) and Melas (fairs) of the region were also very important trading centers. The weekly markets were held at Seraikella, Kharsawan, Kuchai, Bara Gamharia, Dugni, Edal, Gobindpur, Karaikella, Keshargaria and Kumdi etc. Similarly the Melas held on different occasion had also a big turnover of goods. In these melas, the merchants of different areas came and sold their goods. Thus these hats and melas of the area was a part and parcel of the life of the common man and usually formed the nucleus for feeding the bigger trade centers<sup>211</sup>. In the village markets barter rather than cash transaction was the norm<sup>212</sup>.

Internal trade was mostly carried on by means of pack-bullocks. Since the opening of the railway the trade of the area had considerably increased<sup>213</sup>. Sini, Kandra, Chandil and Raj Kharsawan stations became important markets. The traders were mostly Marwaris, various Baniya castes and Mohammedans who carried the goods from one place to another<sup>214</sup>. In Seraikella and Kharsawan there were a trading caste known as the Mahajan who resided there and plied their trade<sup>215</sup>.

The trading activities of the area were, however, on a very small scale, and were confined to dealing with indigenous products. There was no manufacturing unit except the Kandra Glass Works and as such trade in finished goods was essentially limited.

### **Transport and Communication**

The transport and communication system of the area under study was in primitive stage and there were few facilities available for efficient transport and communication. However, it was fast developing in as much as it had links with Tatanagar and Kandra etc., the hub of the industrial belt of Chotanagpur.

Though the area was hilly and abounded in jungles, it had links with other parts of India also. During ancient times there was a trade route from Porahat to Bamanghati through this area up to Tamralipti. This was the ancient route through which the merchants of northern India marched to Tamralipti for trade and commerce<sup>216</sup>. The Roman coins found in the neighbourhood of the area testify to its commercial importance. Again we find that there were several copper mines in the Seraikella and Kharsawan region, which needed transport facilities<sup>217</sup>. Further we find that the Rulers of Myurbhanj, Porahat and Kharsawan had matrimonial relations<sup>218</sup>. Similarly Rulers of Porahat and Sambalpur had also matrimonial relations. Seraikella and Kharsawan also had commercial connection with the Rulers of Orissa. These connections testify to the fact that at that time there were good roads connecting these places with Sambalpur and thus uninterrupted commercial intercourse continued<sup>219</sup>. It was through these trade routes that Orissa salt reached Siingbhum, Seraikella and Kharsawan<sup>220</sup>. Not only that, the pilgrims of northern India made journey to Puri through the Kolhan. But later on when the tribal of Kolhan did not allow outsiders and pilgrims to pass through their area, the pilgrims went to Puri through Seraikella, Kharsawan and Bamanghatu route and avoided the old route through the Kolhan<sup>221</sup>. These were the routes on which subsequently new roads were built during the British period.

In the early British period, about 1819, Captain Jackson came and halted at Seraikella for the construction of a road from Midnapur to Sambalpur via Seraikella. He went to Sambalpur for demarcating the roads. Further, in March 1820, Major Rough sedge came to Seraikella and marched to Sambalpur through the Kolhan along with the Ruler of Seraikella. Later the Midnapur-Sambalpur road via Seraikella was constructed and named as the Jackson Road<sup>222</sup>.

Subsequently the British thought of constructing more good roads in this region. Good roads were necessary for administrative as well as economic reasons. The British had to keep control over the region and suppress tribal uprisings. They had also to maintain a regular link with the chiefs of these areas. Due to all these reasons the British had to construct good roads through this region and connect it with adjoining areas. Thus came up the Chaibasa-Midnapur road via Seraikella, Chaibasa-Bankura road via Seraikella, Chaibasa-Ranchi road through Karakella; Chaibasa-Jaunshedpur road through Ichu and Kuchung, the Seraikella-Adityapur road, Kandra-Adityapur road, Kharsawan-Amda road, Kharsawan-Kuchai road, Seraikella-Sini road and the Amda-Chaibasa road.

The Chaibasa-Midnapur road passed through Seraikella and Dhalbhum. The average cost of construction was about 30 rupees per 1.5 Kms. It passed about 28 Kms. through Seraikella State and went to Ghatsila and then to Midnapur. Chaibasa to Bankura road also passed through Seraikella and Kandra towns. This road had commercial importance because the whole raw silk of Seraikella, Kharsawan and Singhbhum was transported through this road to Bankura. This road was sometimes known as the Chaibasa-Purulia road because it went up to Bankura through Purulia. Similarly, this road was also called the Chaibasa-Barakar road because it served as feeder road to the Barakar Railway station. It ran about 34 Kms. through Seraikella<sup>223</sup>. When the Chandil thana of Manbhum came under Singhbhum this road came to be known as the Chaibasa-Seraikella-Chandil road<sup>224</sup>. This road passed through Seraikella, Dugni, Kandra and Chandil etc. This gravel-topped road was very useful for internal trade of the States of Seraikella<sup>225</sup>. There were three Bangalows serving as rest houses on this road from Chaibasa to Kandra. They were located at Thalko, Dugni and Raghunathpur<sup>226</sup>. The Chaibasa-Ranchi road which passed through Karakella part of Seraikella State for about six miles was metalled and bridged. It passed through Karakella village where there was a weekly 'hat' along side the road<sup>227</sup>. The Chaibasa-Ranchi Road via Kharsawan crossed a difficult range of hills near Terai and Chaitanpur, reached

Rahxo and Erkee village of Khunti-subdivision and from there reached Ranchi. Only cart traffic could pass on this road. Generally, the people of Kharsawan used this road to go to Ranchi<sup>228</sup>. Chaibasa -Jamshedpur Road passed through Icha and Kuchung pir of the Seraikella State for about 32 Kms. It was gravelled and bridged. This road was important commercially as it was connected with the Railway stations of Haludpukhar and Tatanagar which were on the borders of the Seraikella State. Several weekly 'hats' were held by the side of this road<sup>229</sup>. The Seraikella-Kharsawan Road was 18 kms. long and was an all-weather gravel surface road. It connected the Mahmurup station and Seraikella town also. To provide better communication facility between the two places a bridge was constructed by the Public Works Department over Sanjay river, 8 kms. from Gobindpur at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 2.36 lakhs. The bridge consisted of ten contiguous arches. The Seraikella-Sini Road connected the Sini station with the Seraikella town. It ran for about 11 kms. and was gravelled. Sini junction lay on the main Howrah -Nagpur line. As such, the road had an importance of its own<sup>230</sup>. The Kandra-Adityapur was an all weather gravel topped road with length of 18 kms. Kharsawan -Amda road was only 10 kms. long and connected Kharsawan town with the railway station at Amda. Traffic on this road was heavy owing to Kyanite mines<sup>231</sup>.

Before merger these roads within the states were maintained by the Public Works Department of the respective States. The departments had their own engineers, overseers, clerks and peons who from time to time repaired these roads as well as constructed new roads also. But after merger in the year 1948 these roads were maintained by the Public Works Department of the Bihar Government. Not only the roads but it maintained the rest -Bungalows also which lay alongside the roads<sup>232</sup>

### **Vehicles**

Before the advent of the British people used horses and bullock-carts, for travel. The merchants used bullocks<sup>233</sup>. During the early British period a cart was used which was known as "Sagar". It was a low, narrow cart with a pair of wheels about 2 feet in diameter suited for rough travel on bad roads<sup>234</sup>. The 'Sagar' was made of solid wood and was drawn by a pair of bullocks. Horse drawn carriages were rare in this area. They were used by the rulers and landlords only. Later on, when cycles, and 'buses' were invented, people frequently used these vehicles. Cycles became common on the 'hat' days, people carrying merchandise on them<sup>235</sup>

The State transport department started functioning in this area from 14 August, 1952. The bus services were controlled by the sub-divisional officer of Seraikella. At that time there were four long distance routes for bus service in Seraikella and Kharsawan areas. These were (1) Adityapur-Chaibasa, (2) Kharsawan-Adityapur, (3) Seraikella-Sini and (4) Karaikella-Seraikella. The rivers were not navigable. The ferries were unimportant, as they plied only in the rains and were used only for passenger traffic<sup>236</sup>.

### Railway

The railway played an important part in opening up the area Singhbhum, including Seraikella and Kharsawan, was one of the richest places in the world in mineral and forest resources. Thus for administrative purposes and to exploit its mineral and forest resources, the British Government laid out railway lines in this area. The 'Bengal Nagpur Railway Company for the first time started constructing railway lines in this area. As the railway lines passed through the territory of the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan, the British Government made an agreement with the Rulers who gave land for the construction of railway lines and station building etc. On 11 August 1888, this agreement was signed between the Chiefs of Seraikella and Kharsawan and R.H.Renny, Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum. By this agreement both the rulers made over to the Government of India their civil and criminal jurisdiction over those lands which had been taken over for the Bengal Nagpur Railway<sup>237</sup>. The new line for the first time opened up in this region on 22 January, 1890, and thus the Bengal Nagpur Railway line from Howrah to Nagpur passed through these two States. Again, a new railway line was constructed from Amda to Jamda for connecting the iron ore mines of Singhbhum. This line started from Amda (Rajkharsawan station) and passed through Kharsawan State to Jamda in the Kolhan area. For the construction of this line also the British Government made an agreement with the Ruler of Kharsawan on 28th June, 1920. The Ruler gave up his civil and criminal jurisdiction over the lands which were made over to the Bengal Nagpur Railway<sup>238</sup>. After some time due to heavy traffic, double rail was constructed in the area in 1924. Thus the following rail routes passed through Seraikella and Kharsawan during the period 1890 to 1956 A.D.

### Single Line Railways

Section		Date of opening
1. Sini-Chaikidapur	—	22nd January, 1890.
2. Manikpur-Sini	—	22nd January, 1890.



3. Chakulia-Sini	* —	1st June, 1898
4. Kandra-Gamharia	—	2nd December, 1898.
5. Amda (Rajkharsawan) -Dangoaposi	—	17th January, 1924.

### Double Line Railways

Section		Date of opening
1. Gamharia-Kharkai Bridge	—	11th September, 1923.
2. Sini-Chakardharpur	—	25th January, 1924.
3. Manikui-Kandra	—	18th November, 1924.
4. Sini -Gamharia	—	23 February, 1956 <sup>239</sup> .

There was further extension of 16 kms. in Adra Chakradharpur section (broad guage) with the transfer of Chandil Police station of the former Manbhum district to Seraikella Sub-division in 1956<sup>240</sup>. There were nine railway stations in Seraikella and Kharsawan region such as Chandil, Kandra, Gamharia, Sini, Mahlmurup, Rajkharsawan (Old Amda Station), Manikui, Nimdih and Bara Bamboxi. Sini was junction for a branch line running north west through Seraikella to Purulia and Asansol, connecting Jharia and Raniganj coal fields. It had an Engineering Work shop and a Staff Training School<sup>241</sup>. Rajkharsawan was also a junction as a branch line (Rajkharsawan Gua) traversed the southern fringe of the district of the Singhbhum. This line connected the iron and manganese ore area-situated in Mayurbhanj district and Noamundi, Barajamba and Gua in the district of Singhbhum. The more important stations in this area of Seraikella and Kharsawa were Sini, Rajkharsawan Kandra and Chandil because timber for the railways was dispatched from these stations<sup>242</sup>. The passenger traffic was also high in this section and the divisional office of the railway administration was situated at Chakradharpur.

### The economic situation

The material condition of the people showed signs of improvement during , the period under review. Generally agriculture was the main occupation of the people but due to opening up of the mines, industries and trades, additional sources of earning for the people of the area were created and their economic condition improved. But agriculture continued to be dominant means of livelihood. "The people took to cultivation in all seriousness and due to the increasing demand for grains they paid more attention to cultivation than to any other occupation"<sup>243</sup>. This was also due to the fact that cultivation was a traditional and a well known

means of economic stability. Thus cultivation extended from 148-498 acres in 1904-07 to 192-457 acres during the period 1925-28<sup>244</sup>. Production of rice was sufficient for maintenance of the people. During the period 1904-07 when the first settlement of both these states was made jointly, the total area of rice land was 1,26,004 acres<sup>245</sup>. In the years 1925-28, the second settlement recorded it as 1,50,111 acres in both these states jointly<sup>246</sup>. On the other hand the increase in the price of paddy also benefitted the cultivators<sup>247</sup>. The price of paddy in the region in 1893 was 14 seers per rupee and in 1902 it was 10 seers per rupees<sup>248</sup>. It rose to 7 seers per rupee in 1907<sup>249</sup>. In the year 1956 it again rose to 1 seer and 8 chhataks per rupee in the area<sup>250</sup>.

Further due to the increasing demand for crops, grains and vegetables in the nearest industrial centres, the cultivating people of the area became more and more market oriented. This led to the growth of the wide green-vegetables belts in the suburbs of the towns in the area. Jamshedpur, a large industrial town, was situated just on the eastern border of these two States. Seraikella Glass Works Ltd. (at Kandra established in 1942) was situated within the Seraikella State<sup>251</sup>. The material requirements of the people of Jamshedpur, Kandra, Simi, Rajkharsawan as well as some other places encouraged the people of these two States to cultivate vegetables and to carry on pisciculture on a large scale<sup>252</sup>. Similarly, the people were earning a good deal through lac cultivation. In spite of all these, however, there were cases of poor people who fell in the clutches of the money-lenders. Such people remained in perpetual debt. To help them the ruling Chiefs some times opened a loan department to provide paddy seeds and cash at moderate rate of interest<sup>253</sup>. The Begari system (Bonded labour) existed in some parts of the Seraikella State<sup>254</sup> but it was not found in the State of Kharsawan<sup>255</sup>. After the merger of these States, the Government of Bihar also distributed loan among the people for the improvement of their lands. A sum of Rs. 9000 was distributed by way of land improvement loans in 1948-49 and the amount distributed on this account during 1949-50 and 1950-51 came to Rs. 1,31,820 and Rs. 29,055 respectively. Similarly the Government, for saving the people from the clutches of the usurious Mahajans, organised five Grain Golas where loans of paddy seeds could be easily had at a very moderate and reasonable rate of interest<sup>256</sup>. Besides cultivation, many people worked as labourers at Jamshedpur, Kandra, Simi, Rajkharsawan and other important places.

The outbreak of the First world war was a boon for the Tatas. Considerable extension of the works was carried out and since 1915, TISCO was engaged in the supply of steel for the manufacture of

shells. As a matter of fact, the greater demand of labour by the TISCO, the Copper-Company of Ghatsila and the iron mines, the people in the area got an opportunity to improve their lot. Landless labourers and agricultural labourers flocked to it if these concerns in search of employment<sup>257</sup>. Similarly, after merger, steps were taken to provide better transport facilities. Thus new roads and bridges were constructed. One of the most important of such projects was the Sanjai bridge to link up the two States of Seraikella and Kharsawan with other parts of the district<sup>258</sup>. The road from Bandgaon to Jaintgarh, a distance of 130 kms. which passed through Keraikella pir of Seraikella was also constructed by the public works department. A number of school buildings and pacca private houses were built in the town of Chaibasa and elsewhere. This also provided employment to a large number of labourers of the area<sup>259</sup>. Employment opportunities nearer home being enough, prevented migration of labour to Assam and other places<sup>260</sup>.

The economic progress of cultivators and the labourers improved the standard of living of the people. At the same time, the progress of education among the people of this region also changed the life-style of the people through the introduction of new ideas and more modern articles of daily use. There was more consumption of consumer goods. Better type of clothes, lanterns, cycles, torches, soaps, cosmetics, shoes and under wear were more and more in demand. The 'hats' (weekly markets) and 'Melas' flourished. There was more expenditure on amusements and liquor<sup>261</sup>. The economic condition of the tribals and non-tribals, showed a gradual change for a better. Formerly, the tribals lived largely in mud houses but with their economic condition improving, they began to build up pacca houses. Their household which had formerly only earthen pots now contained utensils made of metals. The tribals now used better clothes and there was no paucity of food and drink for them<sup>262</sup>. In short, the economic condition of the people both the tribals and non-tribals, registered a definite improvement for the better. Thus the extension of roads and railways, new sources of industrial wealth, trade in tassar silk, cultivation of new crops and vegetables, opening of new industrial and gradual spread of education had benefited all classes of people-the rich and the poor, the landed and landless alike<sup>263</sup>. Definitely, the standard of living was improving and definitely the material condition of the people of these two States was as satisfactory as that of the people of most of the other parts of Chotanagpur<sup>264</sup>.

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## CHAPTER 8

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### CONCLUSION

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The States of Seraikella and Kharasawan were, originally the off-shoots of the Porahat Raj but later on they became independent of the mother State and established themselves firmly in some parts of Singhbhum. During the second half of the 18th. Century when the British wanted to subjugate the tribal areas of Singhbhum, these two States rendered valuable assistance to them and became staunch friends of the expanding British power. It is an irony of history that these Indian States sided with foreign power and helped it to establish itself as a stable power. While these two States gradually expanded their power over the region with the assistance of the British, they also gradually came under the supremacy of the British power and thus unwittingly walked into the trap of the British imperialists. Though there were some movements of the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan during the Kol rebellion of 1831-32 and during the Kolhan penetration of the British in 1836-37, these movements were suppressed by the rulers with the assistance of the British. During the freedom movement also we find the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan actively participating in the movement under the able leadership of Pandit Gopabandhu Das of Orissa, a close associate of Gandhiji, who came in these areas and aroused the people of these two states to patriotic fervour. The political activities in Chaibasa, Jamshedpur and the other adjoining areas also influenced the people of these two States. The result was that the people of Seraikella and Kharsawan revolted against their rulers under the banner of the Praja Mandal. When India won freedom these two States merged, like the other native States, with the Indian Union and formed part of the State of Orissa. But the merger was challenged by a section of the people who demanded that the States be included in the State of Bihar. This problem was solved by the States-Re-organisation Commission and at last these areas were finally included in Subah Bihar.

In the realm of administration we find that the States had a regular administrative system. At the centre, the rulers of these States were



supreme. They were assisted by officials like the Diwan and the Senapati. The States, as a whole, were divided into pirs under pirpatidars and the village headmen known as the Mundas and the Pradhans who administered their respective areas. In the field of land revenue system the whole land of the States was divided on the basis of fertility and the land rent was fixed accordingly. It was collected by the village headmen. Similarly the States had a systematic judicial system in which the Rulers and other Judicial Officers such as Princes and Diwans delivered Judgement. Besides, the States had their own police and jails and maintained law and order in their respective areas. The States had their own Excise Department also.

The history of the administration of these States from 1620 to 1956 may thus be briefly divided into three major parts, namely from 1620 to 1793 when the Rulers of these States wielded complete sovereignty over their respective areas of control, second from 1793 to 1947 when their powers and jurisdictions were gradually and systematically encroached upon by the British, and last, from 1948 to 1956 when these two States became parts of the Indian Union. From 1620 to 1947 Seraikella and Kharsawan, were under unquestioned monarchy, popular representation being confined to the village level only. The year 1948 formed a major administrative land-mark as it ushering in democratic system of government for the first time.

In the socio economic sphere we find that there was mixed population in the region, comprising both tribal and non-tribal elements. The village headmen of the tribal majority villages were known as the Mundas while the non-tribal villages had Pradhans as their head. In the realm of social organisation we find that the non-tribal social customs and beliefs were the same as in other parts of India, but the tribals had their own peculiar social customs. Their marriage, child birth and funeral ceremonies were different from those of non-tribals. In their cultural life we find that though both the tribals and non-tribals had their own cultural traditions, in some points both showed considerable cultural affinity. "The Pauri Devi" was the chief deity of both the tribal and non-tribal people. The Dewali, Makar Sankranti and other non-tribal festivals were very popular with the tribals also. Similarly the famous "chhau dance" of region was popular both with the tribals and non-tribals. Both the people participated in all the festivals and Melas jointly and this strengthened the bond of unity between the two groups. Economically the area was mainly agricultural.

Systematic irrigation from tanks and bandhs helped the cultivation of rice, maize, barley, oil seeds sugarcane and vegetables etc. The people had their own live stock which consisted of cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats etc. Due to the opening up of mines of kyanite, copper, asbestos, potstone and industries like glass, cloth and ornament-making, trade and commerce improved. At the same time, construction of new roads and the opening of the Bengal-Nagpur -Railway, new township of Gumharia, Sini and Rajkharwsawan Road came up. All these affected the economic condition of the people. Similarly the people of this area had links with the industrial towns of Jamshedpur, Kandra, Sini, Chaibasa and Chakradharpur. The opening of new schools, both for boys and girls helped the growth of education. This educational progress ushered in new ideas and values and like the people of the other States, the Seraikella and Kharsawan people also joined the main stream and helped country march towards prosperity and progress.

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*N.B. All the Interviews were taken by me at Seraikella.*